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The Ottomans in Europe

Uneven and Combined Development and Eurocentrism

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International Relations, University of Sussex

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

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Summary

This thesis challenges the Eurocentric division of international history into distinct ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ strands by demonstrating the intensive historical interactivity between the Ottoman Empire and Europe. Addressing Weberian, Marxian and postcolonial inspired historiography, it seeks to overcome a series of interconnected binaries – East versus West, tradition versus modernity and inside versus outside – that characterise the one-sidedness of these approaches. This thesis argues that Uneven and Combined Development (U&CD) is a theoretical framework primed to overcoming precisely such partialities, and can therefore make an original contribution to Ottoman historiography.

More specifically the thesis tackles problems in Ottoman historiography across three key conjunctures. Through a treatment of the origins of the Empire, I demonstrate that the Ottoman tributary state was a product of international determinations – a form of combined development. Analysing the Ottoman apogee of the sixteenth century, I argue that Ottoman geopolitical pressure on Europe created sociological conditions for the emergence of capitalism. Finally, I show that Ottoman decline was inextricable from the uneven and combined development of capitalism over the course of the long nineteenth century. These historical analyses offer distinct contributions to historical sociological debates around the ‘tributary mode of production’, the ‘Rise of the West’ and ‘modernisation’ respectively.

Theoretically, I show that any historical study from a singular spatial vantage point will always tend to be partial. Instead, multiple vantage points derived from multiple spatio-temporal origins better capture the complexity of concrete historical processes. In presenting this argument, this thesis offers a theoretical reconstruction of U&CD as the articulation of spatio-temporal multiplicity in mode of production analysis, which overcomes the fissure between international relations and historical sociology. It thus extends the theory of U&CD onto the terrain of ‘big questions’ surrounding pre-capitalist social relations and capitalist modernity.

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1. Introduction: Reviving the Ottoman past

In the nineteenth century, at the zenith of Western triumphalism, the Ottoman Empire was labelled ‘the sick man of Europe’, a poetically trite characterisation that has been so pervasively reproduced since that it now effectively functions as a tagline for Ottoman historiography. Within this tradition, the Ottoman Empire has been presented in negative terms as a reactionary fetter that prevented the emergence of modernity in the region, and as a traditionalist past to be negated and overcome. Through this approach, the Ottomans were not only cast as historically opposed to modernity, but also spatially opposed to Europe either as an ideological ‘Other’ (Said 1978) or as a comparative case study against which the specificity and distinctiveness of Western modernity was defined (Neumann and Welsh 1991; Yapp 1992). Accordingly, studies of the Ottoman Empire predominantly focussed on its period of ‘decline’ in direct comparison to the contemporaneous rise and expansion of the West (Quataert 2003). Where the Ottoman imperial apogee was studied, it was considered a ‘social formation apart... largely a stranger to European culture, as an Islamic intrusion on Christendom’ (Anderson 1974, 397). In a word, the study of Ottoman history is overwhelmingly *Eurocentric*.

However, in recent years, the study of the Ottoman Empire has undergone an overhaul, if not wholesale revision. A disparate group of scholars working in comparative World History and postcolonial studies have rejected the image of ‘the sick man’ and recast the Ottomans as a dynamic social formation that was engaged in various modern(ising) activities. Some of these accounts have gone as far as to suggest Ottoman history was comparable to, if not entirely commensurate with, European developments. This paradigm shift in Ottoman historiography is in many ways the product of a renewed cultural interest in the Empire, as well as a wider academic scrutiny of both ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ experiences of modernity. Nonetheless, the shift is so extreme and so dramatic that Ottoman historiography is

now a field defined by the contradictory opposition of these two seemingly irreconcilable positions. It is this contradiction that forms the research question of this thesis – *what can explain how the same historical actor – the Ottoman Empire – can be the object of such conflicting interpretations?*

This question points to a certain peculiarity, neatly captured by Thomas Naff: ‘the Ottoman Empire was a European state. The paradox is that it was not’ (Naff 1984, 143). Similarly, for Paul Rich, ‘while the Ottomans were in Europe, they were until the nineteenth century not fully of it’ (Rich 1999, 443). Finally, for Selim Deringil, the Ottoman Empire had a ‘*dual nature*’ as both ‘eastern and western, insider and outsider, Mediterranean and Asiatic’ (Deringil 2007, 720). Insofar as the Ottoman Empire geographically straddled both ‘West’ and ‘East’, it would appear to confirm the observations of both Eurocentric and postcolonial positions. For Eurocentric accounts the Ottomans were the archetypal Eastern society; for postcolonialists the Ottomans were engaged in what might be typically called Western forms of historical development. With this in mind we might ask: *what if both old and new trends in Ottoman history are right?* That is, does the historical record provide evidence for both? And if so, what is it that has divided these accounts, and this history, into two opposed camps? Hence, this thesis also raises the question: *what if both approaches are wrong?* What is it about each perspective that hinders the incorporation of the other?

The core argument of this thesis is that the separation of Eurocentrism and new Ottoman historiography is rooted in a shared epistemological demarcation between ‘West’ and ‘East’, Europe and non-Europe, which involves the exclusion of non-European societies from the theorisation of capitalist modernity (Matin, 2013, p. 354). In the case of Eurocentric approaches the Ottomans are considered passive onlookers in the universal march of European modernity. On the other hand, revisionist approaches have yet to reintegrate the Ottoman Empire into theorisations of modernity. In turn, the preponderance of Eurocentric approaches remain, to a large degree, unassailable despite the revisionist challenge. I argue that applying the theory of Uneven and Combined Development (U&CD) to Ottoman history can provide a

solution to this puzzle and in doing so, overcome the problems of Eurocentrism and the limits of postcolonialism. I show that U&CD provides a framework capable of tying together the manifold historical conditions, determinations and agency that arise from differentiated and multiple geo-historical origins. Thus not only is it capable of overcoming the sort of spatial abstraction common to both Eurocentric and postcolonial approaches, but it is also able to explicate the peculiarity of the Ottomans' 'dual history'.

It is an especially pertinent time to study the strained ambivalence within Ottoman historiography. For much of Turkey's 90-odd years as nation-state, Kemalist orthodoxy has painted the Ottoman past as an era of imperial decadence, Islamic conservatism and civilizational stagnation. As legitimization for the Kemalist project of nationalism and secularism, the Ottoman Empire was largely a legacy to be forgotten, obliterated and superseded (Çinar 2005, 146–147; Karpāt 2000b, 2).¹ The temporal transformation away from traditionalism and towards modernity was complemented by a spatial re-imagining away from the East, where becoming modern involved turning westwards and turning Western. Cast in Enlightenment discourse, it was claimed Turkey's Western turn would save it from the Oriental particularism that had left the Ottomans as an outsider on the margins of history, allowing it to join the West in the universal march of modernisation. Kemalist ideology thus established a clear distinction from the Ottoman Empire through the interconnected dichotomy of West versus East, modern versus traditional, and universal versus particular.

This orthodoxy has recently come under challenge through an outpouring of nostalgia in Turkey for the glories of its imperial past. Dubbed 'Ottomania', Turkish film, television, art, architecture, fashion and food have increasingly been refashioned in reference to Ottoman heritage. This cultural celebration has been accompanied by a rise in academic interest in Turkey's Ottoman legacy (Brown 1996; Çinar 2005; Citino 2008; Çolak 2006; Onar 2009; Göçek 2011; Jung and Piccoli 2001; Karpāt 2000b; Mills

¹ Where engagements have taken place, nationalism has been bolstered by reducing Ottoman history to an ethnically Turkish one that has its roots in pre-Ottoman ethnic lineages (see Köprülü 1992a; Köprülü 1992b; Köprülü 1999; Lewis 2002).

2011; Öktem 2011; J. W. Walker 2009; Zurcher 2010). Most significantly neo-Ottomanism has served as an ideological basis for a conservative renewal in Turkey. The ruling Justice and Development Party's (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*; AKP) commitment to neoliberal economic restructuring has been combined with attempts to reintroduce Muslim symbols into public life, modify cities with Ottoman symbolism, expand religious teaching in schools, limit alcohol consumption, ban abortion and reintroduce the death penalty. Internationally, Turkish foreign policy is arguably moving back toward the pan-Islamist and imperialist discourse of its Ottoman past (see Cemgil and Hoffmann 2011). In an interview with *Time*, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan explicitly displayed affinity for the intersection of imperial nostalgia with Ottoman traditions:

We were born and raised on the land that is the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. They are our ancestors. It is out of the question that we might deny that presence... It would be self-denial. That's why whether it be in the Middle East or North Africa or anywhere in the world, our perception has in its core this wealth that is coming from our historical legacy' (Erdoğan cited in Tharoor 2011).

Harking back to an Ottoman past has struck a chord because of Turkey's changing domestic and international politics. Domestically, the rise of Islamism in political life and Kurdish nationalism has challenged the secularism and national homogeneity that had been the founding, albeit fragile, pillars of the Kemalist project. In particular, the emergence of the AKP has manifested itself as a fundamental – some say revolutionary (Morris 2005; Tuğal 2009) – shift in Turkish political life, be it dismantling the military's political authority, restructuring the economy, or reasserting Muslim values in social life. Internationally, Turkey has undertaken a diplomatic and economic turn 'eastwards,'² particularly towards former Ottoman territories, in an attempt to establish Turkey as a regional hegemon.³ This has all

² Specifically, by expanding financial and trade links with the Middle East, and attracting investments from Arab and Anatolian – or 'Green' – capital (Demir, Acar, and Toprak 2004)..

³ The Arab Spring and its aftermath have provided ample ground for Turkey to assert both soft and hard power in the region. On the one hand AKP rule has been presented as an example of moderate Islamic yet secular rule for nations for other Arab nations to follow (Kenyon 2013; Le Vine 2013; The

taken place in a context where the economic crisis in the West has compared unfavourably with Turkey's own impressive economic growth, calling into question the need for EU accession. Zafer Çağlayan, Turkey's minister of economy, recently reflected on the Eurozone crisis with more than a hint of *Schadenfreude*: 'Those who called us 'sick' in the past are now 'sick' themselves. May God grant them recovery' (Çağlayan cited in Bilefsky 2012).

This glib assessment in many ways captures the new ideological climate in Turkey. The crystal clear allusion to 'the sick man of Europe' label reveals a Turkish frustration turned sense of superiority towards the West. Having been spurned in their attempts at EU accession, Çağlayan's differentiation between 'us' and 'them' hints at an AKP discourse that has more actively dissociated from Europe. This differentiation can be contrasted with the clear identification of 'us' – that is Turkey – with its Ottoman past. While Kemalist ideology was predicated on a disavowal of Ottoman history, the AKP has sought to revive, rehabilitate and reconstruct it. In particular it has been presented as a tradition and identity that had been violently destroyed and forgotten through the inauthentic and superficial adoption of Western culture (Onar 2009, 235). This has led to the assertion of Eastern particularism against the universal claims of a Western/ European 'Other' (Yavuz 2009, 95; 105). In sum, by recasting the Eastern and traditional values of the Ottomans in a positive light, Ottomania has reversed the normative emphases laden in the dichotomies that have informed Kemalist ideology – West versus. East; modernity versus tradition; universal versus particular (Çinar 2005, 140; Kosebalaban 2007, 229).

This thesis will confront these dichotomies that continue to define the history and political memory of the Ottoman Empire. However, it also seeks to break from Ottomania by showing that the revival of the Empire is built on an equally faulty history that actively reproduces these dichotomies. The problematic nature of Ottomania was starkly exposed in the summer of 2013, when a protest movement –

Economist 2011). On the other, Turkey's tentative military interventions in the Syrian civil war have shown first signs of a military component to the AKPs 'strategic depth doctrine' (Davutoğlu 2001) in foreign affairs.

the largest since the 1970s – spread across Turkey, reacting to the AKP’s peculiar model of authoritarian neoliberalism (Tansel 2013). Revealingly, the spark for the protests was the government’s attempt to convert Gezi Park in the centre of Istanbul into a shopping centre, designed in the style of nineteenth century Ottoman barracks. Typical of the paternalism that has seen the Prime Minister disparagingly labelled ‘*padişah*’ (Sultan), Erdoğan castigated the protesters for disrespecting Turkey’s Ottoman heritage:

‘If you have respect for history, research and take a look at what the history of that place called Gezi Park is. *We are going to revive history there*’ (emphasis added; cited in Singer 2013).

Erdoğan’s challenge demonstrates that the study of Ottoman history is not simply an academic exercise, of interest only to Ottoman specialists, but a subject that cuts right through the ideological and material battles being waged in Turkey in this current conjuncture.

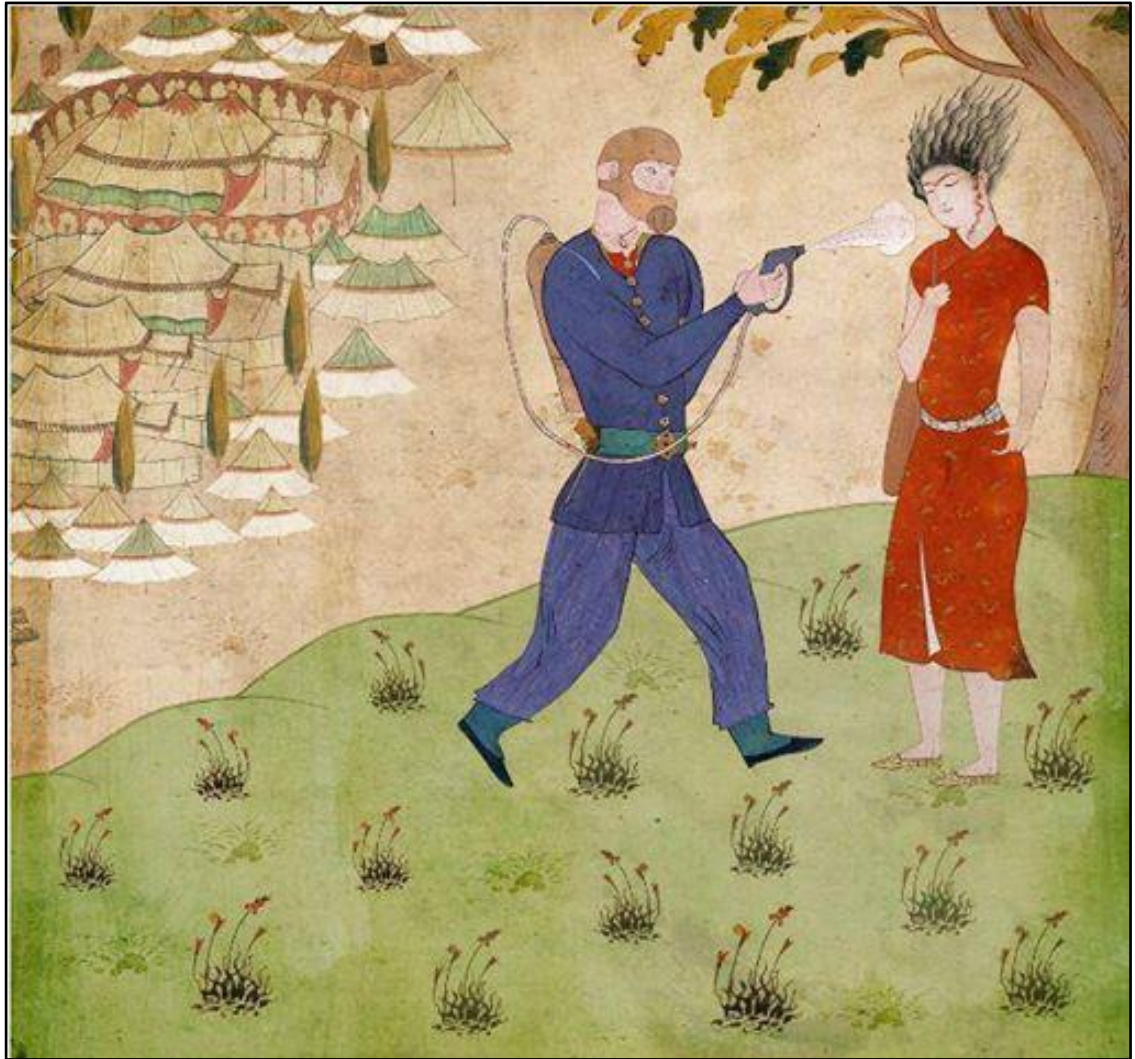


Figure 1. Artistic depiction of 'lady in red' Gezi protester in the style of an Ottoman Miniature, 2013. The original photograph – showing the protester standing passively against a policeman's tear gas attack – became an iconic image of the movement.

The argument is developed in the following stages. In Chapter Two, I critique the existing literature on the Ottoman Empire, by showing that the contradiction in Ottoman historiography between Eurocentrism and its critics is rooted in a problematic theoretical division of externalist and internalist modes of analysis, respectively. In the process, I identify three assumptions of Eurocentrism that have framed Eurocentric historiography on the one hand and not been sufficiently countered by revisionist approaches on the other. These include *epistemological exteriority*, the claim that Eastern and Western societies are theoretically incommensurable; *ontological singularity*, the claim that therefore they must be studied purely in terms of their own singular, internal characteristics; and *linear*

developmentalism, that interactions between the two are defined by the experience of Eastern societies following the path of Western societies, of becoming Western. Critiquing these assumptions orients the subsequent study. In Chapter Three, I demonstrate that U&CD offers a framework which is primed for overcoming these Eurocentric assumptions. By reconceptualising historical processes as the combinatory outcome of a *multiplicity of spatially diverse nonlinear causal chains*, I argue U&CD opens both Ottoman history and European modernity to an alternative non-Eurocentric theorisation. This takes place over the course of the next three chapters. Chapter Four revises the ontologically singular assumption that the Ottoman Empire can be studied solely in terms of its own internal characteristics, whether these be Eastern or Western. Using the theory of U&CD, I show that an explication of the origins of the Ottoman Empire in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries reveals that its *domestic* social relations were in large part the product of *international* determinations. In Chapter Five, I problematise the dominant interpretations of the 'Rise of the West' by exploring the Ottoman impact on the origins of capitalism in the sixteenth century. In contrast to both Eurocentric and non-Eurocentric accounts, I show that the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the history of capitalism's origins necessitates an alternative theorisation of capitalist modernity as an international phenomenon. Chapter Six 'rethinks' the decline of the Ottoman Empire over the course of the 'long nineteenth century.' It rejects claims that Ottoman decline was a product of its own internal dynamics, but it also questions the externalist model of unilinear decline. In the conclusion I reflect on the significance of these findings for the study of the Ottoman Empire, as well as broader theoretical implications of U&CD for the study of capitalist modernity.

2. Torn between East and West: Ottoman historiography in review

In this chapter, I provide a summary of the perspectives and theoretical traditions that dominate Ottoman history. In the first section, I review the prevailing orthodoxy in Ottoman studies. I begin with an outline of the core assumptions of Eurocentrism, and then trace how these become manifest in the emphases on the state and Islam within Modernisation Theory and the English School. I argue that the essentialism of these approaches tend to obscure the social relations that have underpinned both the emergence and spread of Western social forms, thus obscuring Ottoman agency in these processes. I then evaluate World Systems Theory (WST) and suggest that while it uncovers many of the hierarchical and exploitative social relations that have characterised Ottoman relations with the West, it too does not give sufficient attention to Ottoman agency, emphasising instead the universalising effects of capitalism. I show the ways in which WST therefore ends up reproducing many of the prevailing Eurocentric assumptions of essentialist accounts.

In the second section, I review revisionist approaches that have attempted to redeem Ottoman historical achievements by placing a high degree of explanatory emphasis on Ottoman agency. Beginning with the Political Marxist approach, I examine the historical materialist attempt to question the universalising effects of capitalist expansion into the Ottoman Empire. I then evaluate comparative perspectives, which have rethought the Ottoman Empire as a society that was autonomously and endogenously undergoing historical developments that can be described as (proto-)modernisation. Finally, I examine postcolonial approaches, which reject the universality of modernity, and instead emphasise the particularity of Ottoman agency. I argue that although these approaches each firmly challenge Eurocentric accounts, they do not offer alternative theorisations, and thus leave many of Eurocentrism's core assumptions intact. I conclude by distilling some shared

problems between the Orientalist orthodoxy and new Ottomanists, before identifying a potential solution to these problems in the discipline of IR.

2.1 The Orientalist orthodoxy

The basic assumptions of Eurocentrism⁴ – with differing combinations and in varying degrees – inform the prevailing wisdom in Ottoman historiography: the Empire’s ‘backwardness’ compared to the West; its passivity and stasis in the face of European dynamism; and its ensuing and inevitable decline. And it is in response to these components of Eurocentrism that numerous anti-Eurocentric revisions in Ottoman historiography have been constructed. But what precisely is Eurocentrism? What does this tradition say about the Ottoman Empire? I will elaborate on these questions in this chapter and throughout the thesis but here I offer three salient characteristics which orient the present study.

Eurocentrism is, first and foremost, about conceptualising Western societies: their unique social characteristics and trajectory of historical development. This conception is inherently *exclusionary*, whereby a distinct and cohesive European identity is distinguished from non-European societies. Such a discourse therefore depends upon a concomitant theorisation of ‘the East,’ wherein West is juxtaposed against East, Occident against Orient, Europe against the rest (Said 1978, 3). This spatial antagonism in turn tends to be overdetermined with a series of developmental and normative binaries: modernity against traditionalism, dynamism against stagnation, civilisation against barbarity, secularism against Islam (Mutman 1992, 165). Through such conceptual distinctions, non-Europeans have been opposed to Europe, either as an ideological ‘Other’ (Said 1978), or as a comparative case study against which the specificity and distinctiveness of Western modernity has been defined (Yapp 1992). On the one hand, this allows Eurocentric analyses to attribute to Europe an historical

⁴ Throughout the thesis I use Eurocentrism and Orientalism more or less interchangeably. While Eurocentrism tends to be specifically concerned with ‘the West’, and Orientalism with ‘the East’ the *mutual constitution* of these two spatially defined abstractions suggests their inherent conceptual inseparability. Eurocentrism is always an Orientalism, Orientalism is always a Eurocentrism.

and normative priority over non-Europe, as the exclusive harbingers of modernity (Abu-Lughod 2001). On the other hand, The East is presented as an intransigent and threatening primordial foe, representing a fundamental and irreconcilable challenge to the values and traditions of the West (Huntington 1996). All in all, Eurocentrism is an *epistemology of exteriority* (Mutman 1992, 173; Hobson 2007a, 94; Matin 2013, 355); ‘East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet’ (Kipling 1889).

Secondly, in establishing this ‘Iron Curtain’ (Bisaha 2004, 12) of mutual obstinacy, the epistemological demarcation between West and East has led subsequent sociological and historical analyses to focus on the respective *sui generis* characteristics of each. Indeed, positing the superiority of Europe required assumptions that ‘the West as a civilisation has some essence, some core, which had always remained basically unchanged, intact and unsullied by contamination from “outside” sources.’ (Lockman 2004, 56)

That is, the separateness implied in epistemological exteriority is fundamentally undergirded by an *ontological singularity*. Expressed either through the comparative approach (Bhambra 2010) or methodological nationalism (Chernilo 2010), this second assumption of Eurocentrism tends to overlook the multiple and interactive character of social development (Matin 2013, 354). Conceptions of the East have subsequently focussed on its essential characteristics – typically Islam, Oriental Despotism, or the Asiatic Mode of Production. Simultaneously, the distinctiveness of the West is presented in terms of its own endogenous and autonomous history. This ontological claim gives rise to the assumption that any given trajectory of development is the product of a society’s own immanent dynamics (Rosenberg 2006; Tenbruck 1994) and hence sociological theorisations can only be derived solely from within the domestic confines of a single society.⁵

The first two assumptions give rise to the third: the normative and political assumption of *linear developmentalism*, which refers to the global homogenisation of space and time in the European image. The central claim of linear developmentalism

⁵ From here on I will refer to this methodological procedure as *internalism*.

is that European social, economic, political and cultural developments are superior in comparison to the rest. Therefore, these trajectories of political, economic, social and cultural development are universally desirable and destined to be followed and repeated by non-Europeans (Matin 2013, 354). In line with the assumption of epistemological exteriority, linear developmentalism also posits its own mirror image: a conception of decline, wherein societies *lacking* Western characteristics – Eastern societies – tend to decline from their inception due to the developmental and normative inadequacies of their own peculiar social forms. In these ways, Eurocentrism eradicates non-Western agency from world history, while simultaneously diminishing, if not completely ‘whitewashing’ (Wallerstein 1997, 102) the histories of colonialism (Blaut 1993), slavery (Shilliam 2009) and imperialism (Bhambra 2011). When combined with the first two assumptions, this gives rise to a disciplinary provincialism, where the historical processes and sociological categories that orient and define the study of the East tend to be derived from, or against, the European experience (Bhambra 2009; Pasha 2009, 536; Tansel 2012a, 3–4). In short, the normative-prognostic assumption of linear developmentalism serves to confirm Western superiority by ‘enabling, if not actually constituting European domination [both ideologically and materially] of those negatively portrayed regions known as the East’ (Abu-Lughod 2001, 10).

With these assumptions in mind, we can see that *modernity* – and Western modernity in particular – is ubiquitous in the core assumptions of Eurocentrism, functioning as both subject and object of Eurocentric theorisations. Thus, it is in many ways apposite to begin our coverage of Ottoman historiography with Max Weber – an author whose primary concern was unpicking the historical specificity and distinctiveness of Western modernity – not least because his incomplete studies of pre-modern and non-Western societies have been so influential in more recent theorisations of the Ottoman Empire (Sönmez 2010, 39–62). With this in mind, I seek not to provide a full overview of Weber’s work, but to simply outline some of the main themes that have guided ensuing research in the work of others. In particular I will

focus on religion, the state and the absence of capitalism, captured in Weber's concise methodological statement:

‘The impediments to the development of capitalism must be sought in the domain of religion, although certain purely political factors, such as the inner structural forms of domination, also played important roles’ (Weber 1993, 269).

I suggest that these leitmotifs form the basic assumptions around which Modernisation Theory and the English School have constructed their theorisations of the Ottoman Empire.

Weber classified the Ottoman Empire as a form of traditional authority (Weber 1968a, 226–241) and more specifically as ‘patrimonialism and, in the extreme case, Sultanism,’⁶ which tended to ‘arise whenever traditional domination develop[ed] an administration and military force which [were] purely personal instruments of the master’ (Weber 1968a, 231). This form of rule was marked by the recruitment of slave armies and bureaucracies (Weber 1968b, 1015–1017), and a prebendal type of feudalism (Weber 1968b, 1072), both of which were subsumed under the arbitrary decision making of the Sultan (Weber 1968b, 1075). These factors meant that there was no separation of public and private spheres of social life, and no civil society as such. Hence the Ottoman form of authority constituted a fundamental blockage to rationality, the purported precondition of capitalist modernity.

Yet, Weber was also aware that feudal Europe shared many of the above characteristics, and so introduced certain variables in order to distinguish the Ottomans. For Weber, the unified and totalitarian character of imperial authority in the Orient precluded military competition and warfare between states. In contrast, in Europe, there was ‘a precarious balance of social forces where none could predominate,’ which compelled European rulers to enhance tax revenues through

⁶ For Weber, patrimonialism referred to patriarchal forms of rule based on the dynastic household, where ‘domestic authority [was] decentralised through assignment of land and sometimes equipment’ (Weber 1968b, 1011). The decentralised form was typical of feudal societies. In political patrimonialism, or the patrimonial state, typical of absolutism and European empires, the authority of household extended further, wherein ‘the prince organises his political power over extrapatrimonial areas and political subjects... just like the exercise of his patriarchal power’ (Weber 1968b, 1013).

capitalistic behaviour (Hobson 2004, 17). This difference was primarily explained through the variable of religion. In Europe, the Protestant spirit constituted a challenge to Catholic religious orthodoxy and political legitimacy, imbuing the West with a 'rational restlessness' and an 'ethic of world mastery' (Hobson 2004, 17; Turner 2003, 39). In contrast, the Islamic character of the Ottoman Empire and Islamic state (Weber 1968c, 820) was marked by a 'strong otherworldly attitude and political passivity' (Göçek 1996, 12–13; cf. Turner, 2011, p. 53-70), which fused religious and political rule into a totalising monolith of traditionalism. Rather than challenging the patrimonial status quo, Islam legitimised and upheld it. Consequently, Islam (along with other non-European religions) was unable to provide 'the motives or orientations for a rationalised ethical patterning of the creaturely world in accordance with divine commandments' (Weber 1993, 267).

Due to the centrality of the comparative method in Weber, and its emphasis on uncovering the distinctiveness of the West, Oriental society was always characterised as an antithesis of the Occident (Açikel 2006, 68) through a series of absences (Turner 2003, 40). Because of the fusion of public and private, there was an absence of private property and civil society. Unlike Europe, where autonomous urban communes acted as embryonic cells for capitalist development, there was also an absence of organic urban institutions in the East. Instead, cities were 'imposed' on the countryside as a function of state power, and subject to arbitrary *ad hoc* state interference which fettered entrepreneurial activity. In the absence of a social agent separate from the traditional interests of the state – a middle class – social change was only possible through struggle and conflict between the ruler and his administrative staff (Göçek 1996, 12). We thus find in Weber a strong commitment to the Eurocentric assumptions of epistemological exteriority and ontological singularity.

2.1.1 Modernisation Theory

Drawing heavily on Weberian concepts and vantage points in its conceptualisation of modernity, Modernisation Theory also deployed Weber's comparative approach, by

analysing the Ottoman Empire as the pre-modern mirror against which the 'successes' and 'failures' of Turkish modernisation were achieved. This was very much in line with the Kemalist revolution's own explicitly self-conscious dedication to Western style modernisation, summed up in 1928 by Ahmet Ağaoğlu as a choice between 'two roads... to accept defeat and annihilation or to accept the same principles which have created contemporary Western civilisation' (cited in Kosebalaban 2007, 231). The latter path was in turn presented by Kemalist ideology as 'a leap from obscurantism to enlightenment, and Atatürk's orchestration of this [as] his greatest achievement' (Onar 2009, 233). Such a view established itself as the prevailing intellectual orthodoxy after World War II, when Kemalist political autarky subdued and oppressed dissenting voices, and cultivated an uncritical acceptance of the official line (Faroghi 1991, 5). In the context of decolonisation in the Middle East, the modernisation paradigm was deployed in a similar way in Arab nationalist movements, with an implicit critique of the pre-modern Ottoman imperial past (Abou-El-Haj 1982; Barbir 2000; Kawtharani 2000). Such political and methodological nationalism was echoed in Southeastern Europe in Greek, Hungarian and Balkan historiography (Adanır and Faroghi 2002; Adanır 2000). In turn, for proponents of Modernisation Theory (Huntington 1968; Lerner 1964; Rustow 1967), the reorganisation of socio-political structures from Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic appeared to represent an exemplary case study (Findley 2010, 1; Jung and Piccoli 2001, 11), and confirmation of a universal and linear process of modernisation (Citino 2008). As Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba observe, 'Turkey's apparently successful adoption of Western norms, styles and institutions... was portrayed as testimony to the viability of the project of modernity' (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 1997, 4). As such, Modernisation Theory established itself as the most prolific contributor to Ottoman history and sociology (Ahmad 1993; Berkes 1998; Bozdoğan and Kasaba 1997; Karpāt 1959; Kazancigil and Özbudun 1981; Landau 1984; Zurcher 1993).

In echoes of Weber, Modernisation Theory has recurrently emphasised the cultural significance of Islam, and the structural determinations of the patrimonial or

traditional Ottoman state. These explanatory variables are given their fullest exposition in Bernard Lewis' *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Lewis 2002), still considered an essential text in Ottoman-Turkish history and an exemplar of Modernisation Theory in action (see also Lewis 2000a; Lewis 2000b; Lewis 2003). Lewis' treatment of the Ottoman Empire took its cue from the Weberian emphasis on Islam as the pervading characteristic of all social and political life (see also Crone and Cook 1977; Geertz 1971; Gellner 1983). For Lewis Islam's precepts and ideas 'affected the whole structure of Turkish society and institutions' and constituted 'the true basis of private and public life'; the Ottoman Empire 'was Islam itself' (Lewis 2002, 13), constituting the primary form of identity, and thus the overarching motive force behind Ottoman practices in statecraft, law and foreign relations. Through a legalistic reading of state practices, Lewis suggested that the emphasis on Islam found its strongest expression in the Ottoman state, going 'further than any previous Muslim regime in establishing the sole authority of the *Şariat* and its exponents, and in eliminating or reducing the operation of such other systems of law and judicature as were in existence' (Lewis 2002, 103). The prevalence of Islam meant all other forms of statecraft were subordinated to its religious exigencies, articulated through the religious authority of the *ulema*. In foreign policy, this imbued the Ottomans with an expansionist logic. As 'a religion of warriors, whose creed was a battle cry, whose dogma was a call to arms' (Lewis 2002, 12), the Ottoman Empire's *raison d'être* was the 'advancement or defence of the power and faith of Islam' (Lewis 2002, 13).

These elements formed a particular attitude toward non-Muslim states, marked by a strong sense of superiority over Europeans (Lewis 2002, 34), and an intransigent dismissal of their ideas and inventions (Lewis 2002, 103). This, according to Lewis, continued well into the eighteenth century where any real basis for Ottoman superiority had been all but obliterated by ideational and technological developments in Europe. The unwillingness to engage gave the Ottoman Empire a 'crystallised' and 'ossified' (Lewis 2002, 41) nature, keeping it at 'the lowest level of competence, initiative and morality' (Lewis 2002, 35). For Lewis then, Islamic 'attitudes of mind'

(Lewis 2002, 34), cultural traditions and the attendant sense of superiority that accompanied it, meant that the Ottoman Empire was incapable of any internally induced transformation (Lewis 2002, 72). It was inherently prone to stagnation and thus also decline (Lewis 2002, 27; see also Kuran 2010; Ülgener 2006, 30–31, 82–83)

Because of Lewis' dismissal of Islam's ability to reform or adapt to changing circumstances, the impulse for social transformation within the Ottoman Empire came almost entirely from without. Lewis emphasised three factors in particular. Firstly, the end of the Ottoman advance into Europe in the seventeenth century, and the subsequent shift from an expansionary to a defensive imperial policy, shook the foundations of a state whose *raison d'être* was the spread of Islam (Lewis 2002, 27). Secondly, Europe's oceanic discoveries redirected trade away from Ottoman territories, leading to a shortage in precious metals. The ensuing influx of New World Silver led to a massive devaluation of the Ottoman *akçe*, which when combined with growing state expenditure, led to economic stagnation (Lewis 2002, 30–31). These two factors, once acknowledged by Ottoman statesmen in the eighteenth century, began to dampen attitudes of superiority.

But thirdly, and above all else, Lewis strongly emphasised the role of Western ideology (Lewis 2002, 17). Once European power began to permeate into Ottoman territories, 'a great movement of ideas' bound up in the French Revolution broke down 'the barrier that separated the House of War from the House of Islam' (Lewis 2002, 53). For the Ottomans, the Revolution's guiding principles – secularism, liberty, equality and nationalism – constituted a fundamental ideological challenge to an Empire based on despotic Islamic imperial rule and religious inequality. The emphasis on Western ideas as the motive force of change also informed a specific understanding of the agency behind social transformation in the Ottoman Empire. For Lewis, the harbingers of change were an emergent class of military officers who were educated along Western lines, by Westerners (Lewis 2002, 60). An ensuing rise of European style diplomacy gave these bureaucrats the opportunity to spend more time in European countries, further exposing them to Western ideas and culture. With this experience

came the growing conviction that the Empire needed to reform along European lines in order to return it to its former glories. What followed was a confrontation between these modernising secularist reformers and the opposing camp of traditional Islamist reactionaries over whether the Ottomans should emulate Europe, or not (Lewis 2002, 58).

This state-centric reading of the Ottoman Empire is typical of Ottoman historiography under the Weberian-Modernisation rubric. Here, the source of change is rooted in the continuous conflict between state elites over the control of sources of power, with a specific emphasis on the conflicts between the reactionary *ulema* or reformist Westernisers (Berkes 1998, 22–30; Mardin 1960; Ülgener 2006, 30–31). Reformists wanted improved military techniques, while reactionaries viewed such introductions as a potentially destabilising socio-political force. Reformists were eventually victorious, ‘and reason replaced religion as the panacea for the problems in Ottoman society’ (Göçek 1996, 13). Such a reading is itself justified by the history of Islamic-Ottoman society, which, having no bourgeoisie, experienced no political reorganisation from below, and was consequently incapable of organic, indigenous transformation independent of Western influences.

2.1.2 English School

Constituting the most sustained mainstream engagement with the Ottoman Empire within the discipline of International Relations,⁷ the English School replicated the explanatory emphases on the category of Islam and state centric models (although few in the English School would readily identify themselves as either Weberians or Modernisation Theorists). And just as Modernisation theory sought to explain the universalisation of the Western form of society, the English School placed a great deal of emphasis on tracing the evolution and expansion of the European international

⁷ Realist accounts have tended to focus on the modern Middle East (Hinnebusch and Ehteshami 2002) while realist and quasi-realist engagements with the Ottoman typically eschewed any attempt to characterise the Ottoman Empire itself (Brown 1984). Exceptions to this rule include Christopher Tuck’s (2008) neo-Realist approach, as well as M.S. Anderson (1993) and Jacob Hurewitz (1961), whose analyses of Ottoman diplomacy are consistent with the claims of the English School.

system (Bull 1977, 23–36). More specifically, there was a particular focus on the distinctly European origins of the international system, and the process through which non-European societies became ‘socialised’ – that is incorporated – into this system. The English School therefore shared with Modernisation Theory the assumption that the progressive and universal features of European International Society would eventually be assimilated by non-Western societies in a natural and linear process of socialisation (Bull and Watson 1984, 1).

Accordingly, the distinctiveness of non-European societies prior to their socialisation was determined by their own internal ‘rules and institutions, reflecting a dominant regional culture’ (Bull and Watson 1984, 1). Ottoman international relations’ ‘pre-socialisation’ were therefore determined by the legal, ideological and cultural structure of Islam. In particular there was a strong emphasis on Islamic precepts of *Dar-ul Harb* (which geopolitically designated the ‘abode of war’, where infidels live outside of the law of Islam) and *Dar-ul Islam* (the ‘abode of peace’, where Islamic law rules). On this basis, Ottoman relations with other states were articulated in terms of a commitment to the constant expansion of the Empire legitimated by the eternal conflict between Muslims and infidels. This meant a permanently hostile and negative attitude towards infidel Europeans, and thus a unilateral diplomacy and absence of any reciprocity:

‘Ottoman thinking in diplomacy, as in all matters of government, derived from the Muslim concept of the state, which was rooted in the Sharia (Holy Law); traditionally, the Sharia provided for all the exigencies of life and government, thus making the Muslim state, in theory, self-sufficient. In this sense, the Ottoman Empire was pre-eminently a Sharia state. The Ottomans clung stubbornly to the illusion of Islam’s innate moral and cultural superiority over Christian Europe. They expressed this belief in their ideas of self-sufficiency and in their practice of non-reciprocal diplomacy. The Muslim prejudice that whatever was western was tainted prevented the Ottomans from wholly accepting or imitating western ways’ (Naff 1963, 296; Naff 1977, 97 see also; Naff 1984, 142–143).

The English School view of Islamic diplomacy led to a strong conviction that international relations in the ‘conventional’ (that is, European) sense were inapplicable to the Ottoman Empire. Instead, the Ottomans were, by their commitment to Islam, hermetically sealed off from ‘normal’ social relations with other (that is, European) societies (Bull 1977, 27; Naff 1963, 299; Naff 1984, 148; Stivachtis 2008, 24, 27; Watson 1992, 32, 117, 200, 215–216). This also provided an explanation for the absence of modernity. Islamic legal precepts were presented as a traditional, reactionary fetter which kept the Ottomans stuck in a static condition of ‘backwardness’ (Naff 1963, 296). Having established the immutable and intransigent characteristics of the Ottoman state, the English School explanation turned to the process of Ottoman integration into the European state system from the 18th century onwards. As with Modernisation Theory, this transformation was understood as externally stimulated by Europe: firstly, by breaking down the fetters of reaction in the Ottoman Empire; and then secondly, by unleashing Western ideas of equality of sovereignty, reciprocity and extraterritoriality into the East. In turn, the Ottomans were only able to integrate into Europe by abandoning the traditions of Islam and adopting European norms (Bull 1977, 14, 32; Naff 1977, 92; Naff 1984, 144; Stivachtis 2008, 28–32). Once again echoing Modernisation Theory, the implementation of reform was brought about by a state-centred conflict between western educated reformists sympathetic to European civilisation and Islamic reactionaries (Naff 1984, 155), with reformists, and thus Western ideas eventually winning out: ‘In this way, western ideas gradually began to overcome the barriers of Muslim prejudice against all things Christian, and the evolution toward the modern nation-state of Turkey had begun’ (Naff 1963, 295).

Although there are numerous important differences across Weber, Modernisation Theory and the English School, it is possible to distinguish three key features that unite these approaches. Firstly, bearing the hallmarks of both *epistemological exteriority* and *ontological singularity*, the Ottoman Empire is defined through the cultural preponderance of Islam. In such accounts, Islam’s cultural homogeneity, sense of

superiority and emphasis on traditionalism underpinned a reactionary social and political order, the absence of any political or social class autonomous from Islamic order, disdain for external (that is, European) achievements, and thus no internal dynamism. In this way the characterisation of the Ottoman Empire in terms of the cultural features of Islam are juxtaposed against the secular and dynamic features of the West, wherein the secularisation of the Ottoman Empire is understood as a precondition for its modernisation.

Recent historical research into the history of Islam however suggests that such an image is defective if not entirely inaccurate. Dietrich Jung shows that Islam has always been a heterogeneous ideology, and its relation to the state and politics has shown wide variation across both space and time (Jung 2007, 20). This is largely because Islamic texts are silent, vague or ambivalent on 'policy' and have thus always required interpretation and extrapolation in order to be developed into any kind of coherent political ideology or practice. Crucially, this implies that state actions justified through Islam are context specific choices, determined by the time and space in which they are taken. Thus, the politics of Islam are always 'contingent' (Halliday 2003, 115), defined and redefined by 'realistic, political calculations' (Halliday 2003, 118). This suggests that the simple identification of the politics of the Ottoman Empire with the culture of Islam is not so straightforward. How, for example, would a culturalist approach explain the extensive conflicts between the Ottomans and other Islamic societies and communities? Equally, it is not clear how it would explain the alliances and intermingling with the Christian 'infidel' that marked numerous crucial junctures in Ottoman history, not least its period of state formation (I return to these themes in Chapters Four and Five). Moreover, when approaching such historical processes, it is necessary to keep in mind that in the Ottoman case, we find a *dual legal system* (not anomalous in Islamic law), in which the Islamic precepts of *Şariat* were restricted to the sphere of private law, and separated from *Kanun* or state law, which was concerned with crime, property, warfare, and the status of religious and ethnic minorities (Jung 2007, 31). One final point worth noting is that the identification

of secularism with the modern development of the West is itself ‘a mere caricature of the very different historical paths – based on, for instance, strict secularism, state churches, or denominational forms of religious organisation – along which the relationship between religion and politics developed in Europe and the United States’ (Jung 2007, 21). Thus, typical of Eurocentric approaches, the questionable culturalist conception of the Ottoman Empire rests on an equally faulty mirror image of Western modernity.

This becomes especially problematic when considered against the second general feature of the Orientalist orthodoxy. Modernisation and English School approaches place a strong emphasis on the causal impact of the West as the original impulse for social change; as the revolutionary element that shook the Ottoman Empire out of the stranglehold of Islam and propelled it into the modern (European) world. In a word, the mode of explanation here is *externalist*, in the sense that it places a high degree of causal priority on international determinations. This is, however, a peculiar form of externalism, in that such international factors are attached to a geographically and temporally specific conception of Western modernity, a conception which is *ontologically singular* in its core assumption. That is, the historical development of modernity emerged exclusively within the bounds of a single social entity hermetically separated from others – England, France, or more generally Europe – and subsequently diffused outwards to subsume ‘the Rest’ – in our case, the Ottoman Empire. And because such external catalysts of change were not present prior to this historical development of modernity, there was no change at all, and the Ottomans were a static, stationary society.

The firm prioritisation of Western civilisation carries significant normative implications. For it not only supplies a ‘universal yardstick by which to assess the degree of development of other societies’ (Suzuki 2009, 23), but it also provides a supposedly desirable developmental model for non-Western societies to follow (Hobson 2012, 227). Thus thirdly, these approaches legitimise the emphasis on the first two features by reducing societal relations and conflicts to differences in

worldviews – East versus West; tradition versus modernity; Islam versus secularism. In doing so, it presents the historical transition to modernity as a voluntary and thus largely consensual process of reform. This informs an understanding of modern interactive development between these externally related social forms in *linear developmentalist* terms as the unidirectional transferral or ‘exchange’ of Western material and immaterial ‘products’ – civil society, a bourgeoisie, autonomous cities, democracy, secularism, industrialisation – to the East, where the question of being modern (or not) is assessed by how many immaterial and material ‘products’ a society has or doesn’t have. The treatment of material and immaterial products of European forms of society as ‘things’ in this manner obscures the social relations and historical dynamics that underpinned both their creation and ‘expansion’. Absent from these accounts is the extensive history of conflicts and violence that were at the heart of modernity and its subsequent spread. Ottoman agency in both processes is thus negated, or at best treated as a passive receptor of European social forms. In this way, these approaches legitimise and naturalise the diffusionist claim that ‘the East positively and consensually embraced many Western ideas and institutions’ (Hobson 2012, 227). In turn, ‘it becomes possible to see hierarchical difference in a global order not as a product of social relations... but as inherent differences of the substantial properties of social... entities’ (Mucen 2009, 47).

2.1.2 The Marxist turn – World Systems Theory

The Constitution of 1961 brought about a shift in the political climate in Turkey, which, combined with a receding influence of Stalinism on the left, opened greater intellectual and academic freedom, criticism and re-examination (Faroqhi 1991, 5). In the context of renewed scholarly exploration, the Marxist turn in Ottoman historiography was, in numerous ways, a response to the gaps and limitations of preceding approaches. In taking the Marxist emphasis on class relations, scholars set about uncovering the unequal and exploitative relations that underpinned processes of social transformation in the Ottoman Empire, both internally through social

stratification, and externally through imperialism. Moreover, by taking the Marxist emphasis on material relations as a starting point, they sought to minimise the essentialist and reductionist emphasis on the social pervasiveness of Islamic ideology and culture.

And yet, there are several question marks over the applicability of a Marxist approach to the Ottoman Empire and non-Western, non-capitalist societies more generally (see Anderson 2010). This is largely because Marx himself never made the theorisation of non-Western and non-capitalist societies a central part of his research programme, and never conducted extensive research into them to the degree that Weber did. Where they did exist, Marx's statements on non-Western societies were heavily constrained by the dominant Orientalist discourse of the age (Hobsbawm 1968, 22–23). In the *Grundrisse* and *Capital*, Marx briefly and partially characterised 'Asiatic' societies by 'the self-sustaining unity of manufacture and agriculture' within the village commune (Marx 1973, 493). Because this form of production contained 'all the conditions for reproduction and surplus production within itself' (Marx 1973, 473), it was especially resistant to changes and thus marked by inertia. Here communal surplus was absorbed via tributary taxes to the Oriental Despotic state for the 'expenses of the community... for war, religion, etc' (Marx 1973, 473). Unlike the European feudal form, direct producers in Asiatic societies were not 'confronted by a private landowner' but were 'under direct subordination to a state which [stood] over them as their landlord and simultaneously as sovereign' (Marx 1981, 927). In the absence of private property, there was no reinvestment of surplus into production which inscribed into Asiatic society an 'unchangeability' (Marx 1976, 479). Although similar statements are made about European forms such as feudalism, Marx distinguishes Asiatic societies by highlighting the absence of a class autonomous from either agrarian production or the state. Taking these constitutive elements together we are once again presented with a definition of Asiatic society in terms of a series of absences – social classes, autonomous cities, private property – in the sorts of social relations that accounted for the dynamism in Europe. In particular, there is a

persistent emphasis on the lack of social classes and class conflict (Hobsbawm 1968, 34). Instead, the East appears as static and stationary, incapable of any internal transformation and thus subject to no history as such. For Marx then, social transformation primarily comes from without, as 'a function of Western penetration to which is attached a positive value' (Islamoglu-Inan, 1987, p. 7). This view is most clearly expressed in Marx's journalistic work, particularly in his (albeit highly critical) treatment of British colonialism in India (Marx and Engels 1968, 132).

WST provides an attempt to break out of the limited confines of Marx's work on non-Western societies by examining how the expansion of the capitalist world system actively reproduces and entrenches hierarchical relations between more 'advanced' (Western, core) and more 'backward' (Eastern, peripheral) states. In taking the totality of the world system as its unit of analysis, it attempts to situate relations of power and exploitation of any given society within the specificity of its international context. This approach found significant traction as a theoretical critique of Modernisation Theory (Wallerstein, Decdeli, and Kasaba 1987, 96–97), and thus resonated especially in peripheral countries that were struggling with the concrete social dislocations of modernisation. As such, after Modernisation Theory, it is the most significant contributor to Ottoman-Turkish sociology (Çizakça 1985; Islamoğlu-Inan and Keyder 1977; Islamoğlu-Inan 1987; Kasaba 1988; Keyder 1987; Keyder 1976; Keyder 1979; Pamuk 1987; Wallerstein 1979; Wallerstein, Decdeli, and Kasaba 1987). In particular, WST sought to demonstrate that Ottoman reforms, portrayed by Modernisation Theory as the victory of Western inspired reformists over Islamic reactionaries, were in fact reflective of a coercive process of Ottoman peripheralisation within the capitalist world economic system (Keyder 1987, 3–4).

For WST, the specificity of the capitalist world system is explained through a negative comparison with the preceding universal social form of world-empires. According to Wallerstein (1974, 15–18), these pre-capitalist forms of society restricted economic development because large state bureaucracies would absorb surpluses appropriated from agrarian production, thus hindering or completely precluding

accumulation and productive investment. The collapse of world empires was a crucial precondition for the emergence of capitalism, for it released profit-seeking commercial activity from the fetters of overarching imperial states. Now unrestrained, trade tended towards constant expansion and subsumption, creating a capitalist world economy by progressively incorporating greater proportions of economic activity within its own 'logic'. The universalisation of this social form brought about increasing regional specialisation and a world division of labour. In turn, an unequal distribution of power emerged internationally, between core (Western) and peripheral (non-Western) states, involving the transfer of surplus from the latter to the former. In accordance with these theoretical precepts, Keyder presents Ottoman history in two historical phases – 'Before Capitalist Incorporation' (Keyder 1987, 7–24) and 'The Process of Peripheralisation' (Keyder 1987, 25–48). The first phase focuses on the pre-capitalist history of the Ottoman Empire, defined by the continuity with a Byzantine social form that was distinct from feudal Europe – defined elsewhere as the Asiatic Mode of Production (Keyder 1976). The second phase seeks to explain Ottoman social relations by locating their position within the world division of labour and relations of international exchange.

The Ottoman period 'before capitalist incorporation,' Keyder argues, was characterised by a mode of production wherein independent peasant producers with inalienable rights to land were ruled and exploited by an overarching state bureaucratic class (Keyder 1987, 11). Surplus was appropriated through taxes that were paid by peasants to local state functionaries, who either transferred them to the Ottoman centre or kept them in return for military service (Keyder 1987, 12). Crucially, both central and local sections of the state-class had a vested material and ideological interest in maintaining peasant reproduction, upon whose surplus their privileged position was dependent. Thus, at no stage did any agent independent of the state or peasantry seek to transform relations in agrarian production, or the ideological forms of legitimation upon which they were dependent (Keyder 1987, 8; 16). Social change within this mode of production is instead understood in terms of wavering periods of

centralisation and decentralisation, depending on the strength and efficiency of the state in maintaining control over its local intermediaries. In this cyclical social dynamic ‘only the imposition... of an external incentive might have provoked the instigation of radically different relations between the producers and the collectors of surplus’ (Keyder 1987, 9). Thus, the motive for change came from without – the European price revolution (Keyder 1987, 13; Pamuk 2000, 112–130); shifts in trade away from overland routes; closure of territorial expansion (Keyder 1987, 14); and most importantly of all the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the capitalist world-system, all of which occurred independently of the Ottoman state.

Because of the Ottoman social structure, incorporation occurred in the absence of wage-labourers and a well-defined landlord commercial class. Production remained based on small-scale land holdings, with peasants still focussed on subsistence crop production, which precluded the possibility of agrarian or industrial forms of capitalism taking hold (Keyder 1987, 18, 30). Mercantile activity therefore gained the most efficacy in sections of society where alliances between commercial and interest-bearing capital was possible and where agriculture was integrated into world markets under European control (Keyder 1987, 19). With European interests tied into Ottoman markets, European states sought to regularise trade practices by imposing reforms that would create the institutional and legal frameworks necessary for capitalism to function. Thus, in 1839, 1856 and 1867, the Ottoman state was forced to recognise rights of citizenship, freedom of religious practice, private property, and the abolition of state protected monopolies – the Ottoman Empire became a land of free trade (Keyder 1987, 21). The opening of Ottoman markets led to the emergence of typical core-periphery trade relations: raw materials were exported to the West and manufactured goods were imported to Ottoman lands (Keyder 1987, 31). The continued prevalence of small-scale farming meant any transition to cash-crop production was inhibited, so significant amounts of Ottoman agrarian production was now redirected to export markets. While peasants remained largely unaffected, the competitive pressures of European markets destroyed domestic manufacturing,

leading to urban unemployment predominantly among the Muslim population (Keyder 1987, 32–33). In contrast, non-Muslim traders greatly benefited from being plugged into international markets. This gave changing ethnic and religious relations a noticeably class character, leading to tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim sections of the population, and in turn laying the foundations for movements of national separation (Keyder 1987, 33–34).

Despite the high degree of explanatory power placed on non-Muslim merchants and their European guardians, when tracing the agency behind transformations to the Ottoman state, Keyder's analysis is marked by a missing bourgeoisie, based on the absence of indigenous productive capital (Keyder 1987, 46). In its stead, change was generated by a fraction of the state-class, seeking to reconcile its position of power against the joint challenge of local and international merchants. These state bureaucrats did so by accepting Western inspired and induced reforms, 'which accommodated [the new elite's] class nature by allowing it to be the principal intermediary of incorporation, while they sacrificed, rather too readily, various social groups privileged in the traditional order and the overall integrity of this order' (Keyder 1987, 28).

WST's emphasis on the totality of the world economy as the object of study is important, for it brings out how hierarchical relations of power and exploitation between states underpinned processes of modernisation. Thus,

'the Ottoman system lost its specificity. It was now characterised by the dominance of the capitalist mode of production both at the economic and the political levels. Therefore, it was no longer a proper unit of study. Its subsequent history could be analysed only within the dynamics of the world-capitalist system as an integral, albeit functionally differentiated, component of the system' (İslamoğlu-Inan and Keyder 1977, 62).

It is worth noting that methodologically this 'loss of specificity' entails an abstraction from the internal social relations which characterised the Ottoman Empire. Like Modernisation and English School approaches it is a resolutely externalist

explanation. This would be relatively unproblematic if the WST notion of 'capitalism' functioned as an abstraction – that is, as an analytical category requiring progressive concretisation through further investigation, explanation and relation to other abstracted 'moments'. However, Keyder presents the world system as a presupposition rather than the theoretical result of a concretisation in thought (Laclau 1979, 44). According to Laclau, WST's capitalist world economy conflates abstract and concrete levels of analysis and explanation, and therefore appears as a 'vacant and homogenous totality created by eliminating differences rather than articulating them' (Laclau 1979, 45).

This lack of differentiation manifests itself in two dimensions – of temporality and spatiality. Taking his cue from Wallerstein's division of history into epochs of world empires and world systems, Keyder temporally separates Ottoman history into two monolithic blocks – pre-capitalist and post-capitalist incorporation. Within the pre-capitalist block we find a static characterisation of the Ottoman Empire, this time through the Asiatic Mode of Production. We once again find the absence of any internal impulse for social change, and thus also the absence of any social agency for change. In this way, social transformation is always externally induced by specifically modern European developments, in particular capitalist incorporation. In turn within the capitalist bloc, the historical conditions of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries are treated as constant and of a single type, while the causal significance of social relations that existed prior to capitalist incorporation is rendered irrelevant to our understanding of developments post-incorporation. This leaves WST susceptible to the curious empirical observation that the Ottoman Empire's incorporation into the capitalist world economy entailed no transformative effects on pre-existing social classes or relations of production. In other words, the changes of the *Tanzimat* period, and the replacement of the Ottoman Empire by a multiplicity of nation-states, represented no change at all, but were all functional moments of a single and continuous process of peripheralisation. Without a treatment of the specific local social relations and conflicts that underpinned this process, WST

presents a unidirectional and linear reading of Ottoman history. This monolithic and undifferentiated picture pervades Keyder's understanding of agency, where the interests of the reforming state-class are presented as singular and lacking historical variation. The reformists of the *Tanzimat*, the Ottomanists of the mid-nineteenth century, the Young Turks of 1908 and the Kemalists of 1923 and beyond are seen as small variations of the same type of agency (Keyder 1979, 19).

This temporal homogenisation finds its expression spatially, through the separation of core and periphery into two internally undifferentiated blocs. This is, on the one hand, especially problematic for the Ottoman Empire, precisely because there was so much regional variation – from the Christian lands in the Balkans to Anatolia, to its Arabian provinces – reflected in the uneven manner of its very fragmentation. On the other hand, the European capitalist core is presented as a singular entity with a singular interest or function in spreading the capitalist world-system. The manner in which this takes place is devoid of differentiation either in terms of agency or in terms of outcomes – everything is just 'capitalist'. Such a spatial conception tends to reproduce the rigid *epistemologically exterior* dichotomy between West and East, now articulated in the monolithic and internally undifferentiated terms of core and periphery. In turn, Ottoman transformation is again understood in linear developmentalist terms of European social forms transmitted to the East, this time rearticulated in WST as a Western imposition. So despite the high degree of emphasis on exogenous, global factors in its mode of explanation, WST cannot get away from the *ontologically singular* Eurocentric 'logic of immanence' (Hobson 2012, 236). We once again find a distinction between atavistic despotic East and capitalist West with 'the latter as the pioneering creator of modernity' and the former 'a regressive and unexceptional entity that is incapable of capitalist self-generation' (Hobson 2012, 236). This leads to a double 'elision of Eastern agency' (Hobson 2012, 240). On the one hand, Eastern elites are seen to voluntarily follow Western dictates in order to better secure their own material reproduction within the capitalist world system. On the other hand, Eastern resistance through national independence movements are seen to

unintentionally reproduce the capitalist world system (Hobson 2012, 240–242). In both cases, the assumption of *linear developmentalism* remains: Western agency is imbued with historical dynamism, while Eastern agency is presented as a passive function of Western interests. Addressing this very gap in Ottoman historiography has been the especial focus of the new Ottoman historiography, to which we now turn.

2.2 Beyond Eurocentrism? The new Ottomanists

In recent years, Ottoman historiography has undergone something of a renewal and expansion, very much reflecting the revival of the Ottoman Empire in the popular culture and political life of Turkey. This has produced a veritable paradigm shift in the study of the Ottoman Empire, as a wide ranging and disparate group of scholars have sought to upturn some of the more embedded historical and theoretical tropes that form the dominant wisdom in Ottoman studies. In particular, revisionists have aimed to demonstrate that *contra* the ‘sick man’ image of a stagnant and static actor, the Ottoman Empire was in fact dynamic, and engaged in various activities and processes that are comparable to, if not wholly commensurate with, the European experience of modernity. As such, the ‘new Ottomanists’ have developed (and are very much continuing to develop) a body of work that has challenged, if not completely uprooted and discarded, the Eurocentric, culturalist, and partial accounts of the Ottoman Empire.

2.2.1 Political Marxism

Working from the analytical framework of Political Marxism (Brenner 1977; Brenner 1987a; Brenner 1987b), Clemens Hoffmann (2008) provides the most cogent historical materialist intervention in Ottoman revisionism. In large part a critique of WST’s emphasis on capitalism, Hoffmann sets out to construct an historical account of Ottoman decline resting on the sort of class struggles specific to pre-capitalist societies. Drawing on the work of Robert Brenner (1987a, 226), Hoffmann argues that

surplus appropriation in pre-capitalist societies took place through the extra-economic coercion of politically unfree direct producers, whereby political inequality, domination and coercion were ‘inscribed in relations of production’ (Rosenberg 1994, 84). In contrast, capitalist social property relations are distinctive in that surplus appropriation takes place through the abstract sphere of the market, where formally free direct producers sell their labour power in exchange for their means of subsistence (Brenner 1977). As a consequence, under capitalism, economic activity is separated from political coercion, and surplus appropriation takes place through the depoliticised and depersonalised compulsion of the market. For Hoffmann, it is upon this distinction between capitalist and pre-capitalist social property relations that the character of Ottoman decline rests: so long as the social property relations of the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire were based on the fusion of political and economic power, the process of decline cannot be convincingly shown to be capitalist in character.

There are three principal empirical claims that follow from this view. Firstly, Hoffmann argues that the ‘modernising’ attempts of the *Tanzimat* were less an attempt to establish a modern capitalist political form, but more an effort to re-centralise power within the Empire and re-assert the pre-capitalist Ottoman state’s authority over provincial landholders. This involved more forceful claims by the Sublime Porte on political power and surplus appropriated in the provinces: ‘Thus, what seems to be *raison d’état* on the surface remained *raison de prince* or rather *raison de sultan* applying new modern methods’ (Hoffmann 2008, 385). Secondly, as an outcome of these centralising attempts, an intra-ruling class conflict between the Ottoman centre and provincial landholders emerged. Crucially, these struggles were over political control of the peasantry and thus surplus; that is, control of social property relations in which political and economic power was fused rather than separated. Hence, it constituted a struggle between pre-capitalist social classes bound within the social property relations of a pre-capitalist society. Thirdly, Hoffmann contends that the outcome of this struggle was not the establishment of the specific

social property relations that characterise capitalism. The Ottoman Empire declined and collapsed because a pre-capitalist provincial landholding class was able to successfully re-establish its economic preponderance and political authority through national secession movements. Instead of disarticulating the pre-capitalist mode of production, pre-existing social property relations were left intact. Thus, quoting Hannes Lacher (Lacher, 2006, p. 88), Hoffmann concludes that ‘despite these new methods of rule, the Empire did not lose its character ‘of politically constituted property within the state and the proprietary character of the state itself’ (Hoffmann 2008, 387).

In contrast to WST’s ‘vacant totality’, Hoffmann’s historical account captures the empirical complexity of concrete domestic developments in this period, in particular the differentiated and contested nature of intra-ruling class agency. Nonetheless, his principal claim that the intra-ruling class conflict between province and centre was the fundamental cause behind imperial decline proves ultimately unconvincing; while Hoffmann can provide a description of Ottoman collapse, he cannot explain why it occurred when it did. The pre-capitalist centre-periphery conflict identified by Hoffmann was a *perennial* feature of Ottoman history, but it was only in the nineteenth century that this class conflict came to constitute an irreconcilable contradiction in the Ottoman social formation. This begs the following question: what was distinctive about this general struggle at this particular time? To answer, Hoffmann is compelled to introduce as a *deus ex machina* the homogenising pressures of the international context ‘characterised by the rise of capitalism in Europe’ (Hoffmann 2008, 389). While Hoffmann is undoubtedly correct empirically, a theoretical tension emerges between his incorporation of the international context of capitalism and his claim that Ottoman decline was the result of a pre-capitalist social struggle. The relation between the two – pre-capitalist-domestic/ capitalist-international – is *epistemologically external* and contingent; while there is sensitivity to the empirical coexistence of international capitalist and domestic non-capitalist social relations, the two confront each other as externally related and subject to separate

socio-historical processes: 'Ottoman disintegration, on the one hand, and capitalist development... on the other, have thus to be seen rather as having historically and socially distinct origins' (Hoffmann 2008, 373).

This theoretical separation is underpinned by Political Marxism's 'commitment to an almost "platonic" conception of capitalism [or pre-capitalism] as a theoretical abstraction of which empirical reality must conform or remain something outside' (Allinson and Anievas 2010b, 201). That is, the explanatory priority of one set of social property relations or the other is essentially a question of the correspondence between abstract concepts (such as capitalism) and the concrete facts specific to Ottoman development. Consequently, having correctly established a theoretical distinction between pre-capitalist relations and capitalist relations in the abstract, Hoffmann is methodologically compelled to extend this distinction to the concrete *in toto*; any 'really existing' society can only be either capitalist or non-capitalist. In turn, analysis of the historical coexistence of pre-capitalist and capitalist social relations in time becomes dependent on maintaining their theoretical distinctiveness by their concrete separation in space – into the domestic and the international, respectively. As a result, the international development of capitalism is expunged from Ottoman history, while Ottoman history is eradicated from the international development of capitalism. The resulting analysis of the Ottoman Empire is thus *ontologically singular*.

Having made this step, Hoffmann's resultant critique of WST cannot but focus on the empirical validity of its propositions, rather than a theoretical reformulation of the propositions themselves, leaving WST's conception of capitalist development theoretically unscathed. Hoffmann replicates WST's 'neo-Smithian' (Brenner 1977) characterisation of capitalism as 'a way of organising economic relations' (Hoffmann 2008, 390), that tends towards global homogenisation and equalisation (Allinson and Anievas 2010b, 204) only to dismiss its usage for its non-correspondence to the empirical facts. Moreover, Political Marxism's '*a priori*' and 'clear-cut temporal and social differentiation' between capitalist and pre-capitalist social property relations cause Hoffmann to replicate the 'revolution from above' narrative, that obscures the

social agency of exploited classes, and significant changes in social relations from the seventeenth century onwards (Tansel 2012a, 15). The empirical conclusions that follow are therefore theoretically no different from WST; for Hoffmann, capitalist pressure and penetration induced no fundamental transformation in the social relations of the Ottoman Empire.

2.2.2 Critical-comparative approaches to the Ottoman Empire

If Hoffmann sought to play down the external significance of capitalism and emphasise internal *pre-capitalist* social relations, Rifaat Abou-El-Haj's (1991) and Baki Tezcan's (2010; 2011) own challenge to the Orientalist orthodoxy placed the same methodological emphasis on internal social relations, but contrastingly emphasised endogenous forms of modernisation within the Ottoman Empire. Between the works of these two authors, we find the most forceful and persistent attempt to challenge the decline thesis, break out of the academic provincialism of Ottoman studies, and thus insert the study of the Ottoman Empire into the field of World History. Breaking with the orthodoxy in Ottoman studies, their primary historical focus is the seventeenth century, a period which allows them to critically question the dominant periodisation of Ottoman history in terms of 'Golden Age' (1453-1580), 'Stagnation' (1580-1699) and 'Decline' (1699-1922). According to Abou-El-Haj, the Ottoman Empire of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was, in terms of socioeconomic relations, qualitatively different from what preceded and followed it (Abou-El-Haj 1991, 52-54). More substantially, Tezcan frames 1580-1826 – typically considered a period of stagnation – as 'the Second Empire' (2010), an historical break from the prior patrimonial period, and later modern period.⁸

In both Abou-El-Haj's and Tezcan's work, the driving force for these changes were new elites, forged outside of the typical patrimonial parameters of ruling class

⁸ A similar perspective is offered by Salzmann, who frames the evolution of the Ottoman Empire in terms of a period of state centralisation and decentralisation, and challenges the dominant view that centralisation is necessary for successful state formation (Salzmann 1993). Similarly, Karen Barkey argues that this decentralisation entailed neither stagnation, nor decline, but a renegotiation of the relationship between state and society (Barkey 1994; Barkey 2008). I will return to these arguments in more detail in Chapter Six.

reproduction that defined early Ottoman history. For Tezcan, the new elites were drawn predominantly from a class of upwardly mobile Muslim ‘commoners’, who were tied to the increasing ‘monetisation’ and ‘marketisation’ of the Ottoman economy (Tezcan 2010, 35, 196). These new elites used their accumulated wealth to effectively buy into the Ottoman political system (Tezcan 2010, 205–207), and in doing so build significant apparatuses of political power, either through recruiting mercenary armies (Tezcan 2010, 141–145) or purchasing positions within the Ottoman Janissary army (Tezcan 2010, 94, 189). This effectively changed the social character of the Ottoman ruling class – away from military men concerned with agrarian surpluses and geopolitical accumulation (Tezcan 2010, 82–88), towards an entrepreneurial class concerned with the accumulation of private wealth via the market (Tezcan 2010, 91–93). Concomitantly, the Ottoman system of governance became more reliant on forms of law that were capable of arbitrating the ‘privatisation’ of Ottoman social, political and economic life (Tezcan 2010, 30–33). The subsequent rise of *ulema* trained jurists, and the preponderance of Sharia law over the previously predominant *Kanun* law (Tezcan 2010, 27–30, 36–44, 67–71) was evidenced in the increasing use of legal precepts to legitimise political action (Tezcan 2010, 18–19). These developments together – the rise of the Janissaries as a political corporation and the emergence of private law – constituted a fundamental transformation in political power relations. In short, the Second Empire witnessed a shift from the absolutism of the Sultan’s patrimonial authority to a more ‘constitutional’, ‘democratic’ and ‘limited’ form of government (Tezcan 2010, 77, 151–156, 212), that was ‘moving toward secular modernity’ (Tezcan 2010, 227) and expanding the ‘political nation’ (Tezcan 2010, 228). The numerous royal depositions, instantiated by these new elites, were not signs of decaying political order, but the renewal of the Ottoman Empire in ways that were commensurate with other early modern polities (Tezcan 2010, 47–48, 166–173, 218).

Abou-El-Haj’s and Tezcan’s work thus demonstrates that the Empire was a far cry from a stagnant society, placed in inferior contrast to the dynamism of contemporaneous European societies. Rather, the seventeenth century Ottoman

Empire experienced dynamic social change that corresponded with the Early modern experiences of Europe of the same period (Abou-El-Haj 1991, 6). According to Abou-El-Haj, the Ottoman state was moving towards the relative autonomy, specialisation and rationalisation that is typical of the modern state (Abou-El-Haj 1991, 54–55). For Tezcan,

‘the Second Empire came to be marked administratively by an early modern state, as opposed to a medieval dynastic institution; culturally by an early modern sensibility; economically by a more market oriented economy; legally by a more unified legal system that came to exert some authority over the dynasty; monetarily by a more unified currency system; politically by the development of a type of limited government that grew out of the interaction between the legal developments of the time and such processes as ‘civilisation’ and ‘proto-democratisation’; and socially by a *relatively less stratified society*’ (Tezcan 2010, 10).

Such claims suggest that the fundamental backstop of the Orientalist orthodoxy – that up until the nineteenth century, the institutions and social relations of the Ottoman Empire remained fundamentally the same and unchanging – needs to be rethought, if not completely discarded. Moreover, it becomes inappropriate to study the decline of the Ottoman Empire entirely through proximate, sudden and short-term causes specific to the nineteenth century, as though they were completely separate from prior – seventeenth and eighteenth century – developments. Thus, the basic claim of linear developmentalism – that social change in the Ottoman Empire was only possible under the impetus of the West in the nineteenth century – appears untenable against Abou-El-Haj’s and Tezcan’s account of socioeconomic transformation. Tezcan argues that two causes of Ottoman decline – military weakness and resistance to scientific thinking (both of them classic tropes of Orientalist orthodoxy) – were direct, but unintentional outcomes of the internal proto-modernisation of the Empire (Tezcan 2010, 239–242). This not only lands a knockout blow against culturalist explanations, but moreover forces us to realign the vantage point of our historical study away from a state centric bias, and towards

understanding the significance of social agency ‘from below.’ Finally, when these points are taken together, Ottoman history, at least of this period, appears not as something *epistemologically distinct* from the West, but as a social entity comparable if not wholly commensurate with European and global processes of Early modern transformation; the Ottoman Empire was not ‘exceptional’.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of these interventions in the study of Ottoman history. In addition to the originality and depth of their historical insights, mined from hitherto under-scrutinised sources, these works contribute to a wider paradigm shift that may well permanently dislodge Orientalist orthodoxy as the dominant wisdom in Ottoman studies. Equally significant is the achievement of these authors in pushing the study of the Empire beyond the highly provincial jurisdiction of Ottoman specialists (Faroghi 2010, 57). However, there remain a series of tensions between theory and history in their work, which somewhat undermine the attempts to offer an alternative theorisation of Ottoman history.

To begin with, their comparative approach falls into the Eurocentric trap of taking theoretical frameworks derived from European history as a norm. Thus, the history of the Ottoman Empire is understood through concepts associated with the study of European early modern experience, such as ‘feudalism’, ‘marketisation’, ‘constitutionalism’, ‘proto-democratisation’ and anachronistically ‘secular modernity.’ In other words, Ottoman history is, as with the above approaches, situated in an undifferentiated and homogenous conception of universal history, albeit one that was part of a much earlier period (the early modern). In turn, the content of these concepts are not subjected to any rigorous scrutiny, but largely presupposed as theoretically unproblematic. As such, there is little opportunity for the likes Abou-El-Haj and Tezcan to consider how these concepts might be reconstituted and re-theorised against the Ottoman experience. Instead, the research questions that orient Ottoman history become entirely whether the Empire fits these conceptual norms or not. Consequently, Tezcan and Abou-El-Haj’s claim that it *does* fit is at best a shallow riposte to the Orientalist orthodoxy, at worst an active acceptance of its core

assumptions. Put differently, the powerful empirical challenge to Eurocentric conceptions of modernity offered by Tezcan is not complemented by an alternative theorisation.

But even putting aside these theoretical implications, this comparative approach becomes especially problematic when considered within the broader history of the Ottoman Empire. For these concepts associated with modernity to be effective, they must coherently distinguish from historical epochs beyond the relatively narrow confines of the historical survey presented here – namely the ‘Long Seventeenth Century’. To begin with, emphasising the ‘limited’ form of government of the Second Empire implies that the patrimonial and centralised forms of government before and after were relatively untrammelled in their absolutist authority. Not only does this replicate an Orientalist image of the early and late Ottoman state as ‘despotic,’ but moreover it underappreciates the historical complexity of these periods of Ottoman history. As I go on to show in later chapters, Sultanic and governmental authority was *always* limited and contested by competing social classes within the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, the identification of monetisation and marketisation as the driver of democratic and constitutional reforms begs the question as to why the radical intensification of these processes were unable to yield in similar results in the nineteenth century, but instead resulted in its opposite – political centralisation and autocracy. Tezcan’s and Abou-El-Haj’s claim that the Second Empire was a fundamental, modernising break with the past and future Empire requires reconsideration, or at least greater theoretical nuance.

Because of such limits to Tezcan’s and Abou-El-Haj’s theorisation of the Empire, both end up having to qualify their claims with caveats that leave their core theoretical position vulnerable. Tezcan states:

‘Because different parts of the world inherited different historical legacies, the expansion of markets and trade that was experienced almost all over the world in the sixteenth century did not have the same impact in every region’ (Tezcan 2010, 232).

Tezcan is compelled to (correctly) acknowledge the very elements of social reality – sociological difference; sociological multiplicity; interactive multiplicity⁹ – that are excluded by his methodological claim that ‘the present study privileges local dynamics and identifies the actors of change primarily within the Ottoman Empire’ (Tezcan 2010, 242; Tezcan 2011, 77).¹⁰ This minimises the historical significance of international factors in Ottoman history – such as interactions with European states, both friendly and belligerent, the wars with the Safavid Empire, and the changing geopolitical context associated with the emergence of capitalist modernity. The issue here is not simply that international factors are missing. Rather, this challenge to the Orientalist orthodoxy rests on an unstable foundation – the theoretical claim that change was internally induced, a claim that the authors implicitly accept is incapable of providing an adequate understanding of the peculiar trajectory of Ottoman development. As such, *epistemological exteriority* is overcome by collapsing distinctions between the Ottoman Empire and Europe into a homogenous, *ontologically singular*, and linear conception of (early) modern development.

2.2.3 Postcolonialism in the Ottoman Empire

Dealing with issues of historical difference and theoretical homogeneity are central to the postcolonial research programme. The primary focus of postcolonialism has been on correcting the Eurocentric bias of social theory through the study of colonial modernity, ‘that is, the experience of modernity by non-European societies under European duress’ (Matin 2013, 359). This has involved three steps. Firstly, postcolonial authors have sought to ‘Provincialize’ Europe by decentring the Eurocentric claim that

⁹ Tezcan also insists that prior to the Second Empire, a specifically international determination – geopolitical accumulation – was central to the reproduction of Ottoman ‘feudalism’ (Tezcan 2010, 85–88)

¹⁰ Similarly, Abou-El-Haj states ‘the Ottoman elite throughout its history was in some contact with Europe – there never was an “iron curtain” blocking the exchange of new ideas’ (Abou-El-Haj 1991, 68). However ‘the adoption of cultural patterns, whether from Europe or elsewhere, was not simply the result of a foreign presence, nor was it the emulation of an attractive outside model: it was determined by the needs of the Ottoman ruling elite’ (Abou-El-Haj 1991, 68) and ‘the forces crucial in bringing about change were internal, reflecting the interests of a section of the ruling class which considered political change as advantageous to itself’ (Abou-El-Haj 1991, 72).

Western social forms and accompanying discourses are universal (Chakrabarty 2000). Postcolonial approaches thus emphasise the relational development of European modernity and identity as always constituted against, and through the subordination of, a non-Western 'Other' (Said 1978). In doing so, these authors have stressed the centrality of colonial practices as deeply embedded in the structure of European power and identity (Bhambra 2009). Secondly, postcolonialism places the particularity of alternative visions of society originating in non-Western cases at the heart of its research programme (Acharya 2011). By 'giving a voice to the Other', postcolonialism shows how subaltern experiences have disrupted Eurocentric visions of history, thus reasserting the significance of Eastern agency in world history (Bhabha 2012). The third step draws on the first two in order to assert the heterogeneity of social development and its irreducibility to exclusively European forms. According to postcolonialism, history is neither universal nor homogenous, but marked by difference, hybridity and ambivalence – in short, multiplicity.

In this overall project, the Ottoman case may appear as an anomaly. For much of its history as an expansionist empire the Ottomans practiced their own 'colonial' policy (in the most general sense of the term). Moreover, they managed to avoid formal colonisation at the hands of Europe in the nineteenth century, a resistance that was very much predicated on the relatively successful attempts of the Ottoman ruling-class to self-identify with and emulate Western colonial powers. And yet, their subjection to practices of informal colonisation was arguably the fiercest and most destructive among all formally independent states of the modern period. Returning to some of the themes raised in the introduction, postcolonial approaches have been primarily concerned with disclosing this very ambivalence of the Ottoman Empire as an archetypal Oriental society that was nonetheless always in Europe, both Western and Eastern, colonial and (semi-)colonised. In turn, the key focus of postcolonial research has been the Ottoman attempts at reform, centralisation and homogenisation along nationalist lines by the ruling class in the (late) nineteenth century, and how provincial and local agents responded to these changes. In doing so,

it has sought to challenge both Modernisation and WST approaches that have assigned transformative agency solely to the West and Western educated elites alone, by emphasising the role of non-Western, gendered, marginal and subaltern histories (Bogaç 2003; Deringil 1999; Deringil 2003; Kasaba 2009; Khoury 2002; Makdisi 2000; Makdisi 2002a; Makdisi 2002b; Peacock 2009; Semerdjian, 2008; Zilfi 2010).

Selim Deringil's (1999; 2003) and Ussama Makdisi's (2000; 2002a; 2002b) works develop these arguments through an analysis of 'Ottoman Orientalism', referring to a process in which Ottoman state-elites sought to avoid colonisation by establishing themselves as an 'also-ran' colonial state. Under the pressure of, and in resistance to, European colonialism these state-elites ended up replicating European discourses of Orientalism in reference to their own subjects. This involved a reconceptualisation of Arabs, tribes, and non-Sunni subjects in Ottoman provinces as 'nomadic' and 'savage', and an avowal of the necessity to modernize and 'improve' the Ottoman periphery through the coercive and disciplinary subordination of its provinces (Deringil 2003, 311–312). Deringil traces the development of this colonial mind-set to Ottoman studies of European colonialism in Africa, and how a subsequent article issued by the Ottoman state on rule in Libya articulated a distinctly French colonial discourse: civilising the subjects, winning over hearts and minds, introducing modern forms of law, architecture, education, printing press, private firms, trade and a standing army (Deringil 2003, 319–322). Similarly, Makdisi shows how sectarian rebellions in Mount Lebanon led Ottoman elites to portray locals as bearers of a pre-modern form of fanaticism, in turn legitimising the necessity to 'impose modernity on a recalcitrant periphery' (Makdisi 2002a, 782). Thus, for both authors, the Ottoman project of modernisation was conflated with colonialism, and cast in terms of European discourses of the 'civilising mission' and 'white man's burden' common to paternal colonialism. However, for both Deringil and Makdisi, 'Ottoman Orientalism' didn't simply and directly replicate Western norms, but was refracted through 'the prejudices, practices, concepts, methods and tools of Ottoman statecraft' (Deringil 2003, 312). The central aim was to create a state that was technologically and

temporally coeval with Europe, but culturally distinct and politically independent. As such, it was not simply an Occidentalism – a reverse Orientalism – but a relation of engagement, adaptation and emulation that ‘de-Orientalised the empire by Orientalising it’ (Makdisi 2002a, 773).

Makdisi traces the roots of this ambivalence in a shift in the dominant discourse of Ottoman power. The traditional form of social organisation was based on ethnic and religious differentiation alongside temporal integration, underpinned by the notion of an already complete Islamic order (Makdisi 2002a, 775). So long as this order was undisturbed, imperial authority acknowledged and accepted pre-imperial provincial structures, leaving locally heterodox ways of life intact. This meant that the imperial-centre was dependent on provincial elites to perform the functions of the state locally. Thus, in cases where provincial elites rebelled against Ottoman authority, local autonomy would break down; the state would denounce rebels as infidels and discipline them as such. The play between rebellion and pardon, denunciation and toleration, were the defining elements of the Ottoman centre-periphery relations – a dialectic that gave the Ottoman social form a cyclical and temporally fixed character: ‘the notion of coexistence in the same temporal moment, of politics without progress, was essential to the maintenance of a dynamic imperial relationship between the Sultan and his subjects’ (Makdisi 2002a, 776).

The temporal fixity of Ottoman rule was upset and transformed by a series of military defeats at the hands of European powers. In response, the Ottoman state began a process of modernisation that would redefine the traditional discourse of Ottoman power (Makdisi 2002a, 778). During the nineteenth century, there was a shift away from religious differentiation and temporal integration, towards spatial integration (in the form of Ottomanist nationalism) and temporal differentiation between ‘advanced’ and ‘backward’ sections of society. Among Ottoman elites, Europe was heralded as the example, or highest point of progress, against which the Ottoman centre defined itself as the heirs of modernity. In opposition, the Ottoman provinces were portrayed as not yet modern, a modernity to be imposed and emulated. By

modernising its 'backward subjects', the Ottoman state-elite aspired to the spatial integration of national homogeneity and coherence (Makdisi 2002a, 780).

The effects of this shift in the Ottoman discourse of power manifested itself in an increased distance of state-elites from the population, with the latter now viewed in positivist terms as material resources that could be deployed against Europeans in defence of the Ottoman Empire (Deringil 2003, 338). However, the relative weakness of the Ottoman centre meant that this colonialism was considerably more difficult to impose and maintain, and thus also precarious. In this situation, the Ottoman centre remained heavily dependent on its periphery, which necessitated negotiated and consensual forms of authority between itself and local agents (Deringil 2003, 340). Thus, in the very attempt to resist subalternisation at the hands of Western colonialists, Ottoman Orientalists were compelled to bring "their own" subalterns into history' (Deringil 2003, 342). The participation of these peripheral agents in the process of modernisation in turn validated 'the new temporal hierarchy of Ottoman Orientalism' (Makdisi 2002a, 771; see also 791). For Deringil and Makdisi, the introduction of these additional layers of subaltern agency poses a fundamental challenge to the traditional thesis of Orientalism. It shows that rather than the stagnant Orient that needed to be Westernised, Ottoman Orientalism posited an independent and indigenous movement resisting Western imperialism, while moving towards modernity (Makdisi 2002a, 772).

Deringil and Makdisi's sensitivity to the amalgamated and refracted nature of colonialism in its local manifestations constitutes a major advance in Ottoman historiography. By mobilising the postcolonial perspective and stressing the importance of peripheral agency, they have brought to life the contested character of Ottoman 'modernisation.' In doing so, these authors have revived the significance of dynamics within the empire itself and avoided privileging Western European influence as the sole source of change. Most importantly, through the concept of Ottoman Orientalism, they have undermined the Eurocentric claim that the universalisation of modernity would entail international homogenisation of societies

in line with the Western social form. Instead, they have convincingly demonstrated the heterogeneity inherent to colonial modernity by highlighting the ways in which Ottoman state-elites and their subjects appropriated and modified European influences through the Ottoman prism. For these reasons, the postcolonial approach has provided the strongest existing critique of the Eurocentric assumptions that still underpin the bulk of Ottoman historiography.

Yet, the value of the Deringil and Makdisi's works comes at an excessively high cost, because they reproduce some of the more general limitations attached to the postcolonial approach. Spatially, both place an empirical emphasis on imperial provinces – Arab provinces in particular – at the expense of imperial heartlands such as Anatolia and Rumelia. Rehabilitating the importance of local dynamics in imperial peripheries is to be lauded, but not at the expense of removing these local dynamics from the broader context in which they unfolded (Göçek 2012, 554). For while it may avoid the pitfalls of Eurocentrism, such a narrow spatial focus runs the risk of reproducing the *ontological singularity* and *epistemologically exteriority* that we found to be so problematic in Eurocentrism. This becomes especially evident when we consider how postcolonialism's central reference points – Orientalism, colonialism, modernity and Europe – are all flattened into undifferentiated and homogenous external entities. In turn, it becomes difficult to identify the manner in which these entities are affected and reconstituted by the colonial peripheries. Where, for example, is the treatment of the Ottoman impact on European modernity?

Temporally, these approaches exhibit a lack of in depth engagement with Ottoman history prior to the colonial modern epoch, leaving us with two monolithic temporal blocs: colonialism and pre-colonialism. This blunts our ability to differentiate and trace the conjunctural specificities of 500 years of pre-colonial history that gave rise to the particular form of Ottoman society confronted by colonialism in the nineteenth century. In the absence of such historical sensitivity, these 500 years of pre-colonial history are presented in a *sui generis*, cyclical and inert fashion that is not too far off typical Eurocentric assumptions of Oriental stagnation.

This lacuna in the postcolonial literature has led some to speculate that the very notion of a postcolonial history of the pre-colonial Ottoman Empire should perhaps be dismissed out of hand as anachronistic (Bisaha 2004, 6–7; Matar 1999, 8–9). While such a criticism misses the methodological nuance of postcolonialism, it would appear that postcolonial approaches have had difficulty extending their reach beyond the epoch of capitalist modernity. But more pertinently perhaps, the absence of formal colonialism in Ottoman territories, and consequently the indeterminacy of anything that might be described as *postcolonial*, further complicates and destabilises the analytical reach of postcolonialism when applied to the Ottoman case (Bryce 2013, 100).

The very ambivalence of postcolonialism *vis-à-vis* the Ottoman case marks a recurrent problem in postcolonial studies generally. Despite the centrality of the Ottoman Empire in the production of European forms of knowledge and identity – a ‘Turkish Mirror’ (Yapp 1992) – it has typically been left out of how postcolonialism’s central reference points – colonialism, Orientalism, Europe and modernity – have been constructed in the first instance. Consequently, such reference points appear in postcolonialism as pre-given and presupposed historical categories, imagined or otherwise. The lack of engagement with the very production of these social forms leaves us with a flat and monolithic conception of modernity that is ‘decidedly singular and decidedly European’ (Cooper 2005, 20). As Derek Bryce argues, this tends to ‘reproduce the Orientalist trope that the specificities of “Oriental” states and societies are subordinate to the all-encompassing and irreducible categorisation of their *being Oriental*’ (Bryce 2013, 100). So, while additional empirical frameworks gleaned from the postcolonial approach have decentred many Eurocentric presuppositions, these presuppositions have remained theoretically intact and at worst actively replicated (Chibber 2013, 26; Halperin 2006, 43). *Pace* postcolonialism, a truly non-Eurocentric, post-colonial interpretation of history should seek to pose an alternative theoretical framework to Eurocentric conceptions in which to conduct historical and sociological study (Matin 2013, 365). To modify Frederick Cooper’s call to

arms: in order to truly ‘provincialize’ Europe one must dissect European history itself, and there is no more central myth to be dissected than that of narrating European history around the history of capitalism (Cooper 2005, 22).

2.3 Conclusion – the promise of International Relations

theory

This chapter has provided an overview of the dominant approaches to Ottoman historiography. It has shown that there are two seemingly irreconcilable camps that hold mutually incompatible theoretical positions. The prevailing orthodoxy, until very recently, has viewed the Ottoman as ‘the sick man of Europe’, a stagnant and declining Empire. This view has recently been overturned and rejected by a growing body of literature that has shown the Ottomans to be a modern(ising) society that is largely comparable with, and/or involved in, European history. This chapter has unearthed the substance behind this division, by showing that these positions rest on different modes of explanation and analysis. Orientalist approaches, rejecting the possibility of internal social change, have tended to depict Ottoman history from an externalist – that is Western – vantage point. We have seen, moreover, that this externalism is itself problematically attached to a Eurocentric conception of modernity – where international factors are derived exclusively from the historically specific experiences of an ontologically singular – and unanimously *European* – society.¹¹

Rejecting this image, the new Ottomanists have asserted that the Empire was capable of, and engaged in, internal social change independent of Western compulsion. On the one hand, postcolonialists have rejected the sort of linear developmentalism associated with Eurocentrism by asserting the particularity of

¹¹ In Lewis, the experience of the French Revolution becomes the driving ideological force of international change. In modernisation theory more broadly, the unilinear development of a single society through stages informs the model of development for all societies. In WST, categories with origins in domestic social relations – ‘division of labour’, ‘core/ periphery’, ‘town/ country’, and ‘unequal exchange’ – articulate the logic of international determinations (I would like to thank Alex Anievas for emphasising this element of WST analysis to me).

Ottoman development. But in doing so, they have set up a strict distinction between the Ottomans and Europe, thus reproducing the Eurocentric assumption of epistemological exteriority between West and East. On the other hand, comparative approaches have overcome this epistemological exteriority, but have done so by collapsing differences between the Ottomans and Europe into a homogenous and undifferentiated conception of (early) modernity. This replicates the Eurocentric assumption of *linear developmentalism* – that *all* societies go through the *same* stages. To reframe this problem, the tensions between these disparate challenges to Eurocentrism lie in how we negotiate *universal* and *particular* – how do we simultaneously overcome linear developmentalism (the universal) and epistemological exteriority (particularism)?

The problem with overcoming this, I argue, is rooted in the shared assumption of *ontological singularity* and a related emphasis on internalist analysis. As we have seen, in order to explain certain key conjunctures in Ottoman history, such accounts have resorted to sneaking in conceptions of the international – external determinations – which they nonetheless have shied away from theorising. Kamran Matin (2013) has convincingly argued that postcolonialism has hitherto neglected this task, due to its own epistemological presuppositions. As we have seen, postcolonialism has sought to critique the Eurocentric claim that the spread of Western social forms constitutes an inevitable and desirable historical development. This critique of Eurocentric social *homogenisation* has been supplemented with a simultaneous rejection of ‘*the universal*’ as a concept, itself identified as the specific epistemological underpinning of this homogenising project. As such, postcolonialism accepts the Eurocentric conflation of homogeneity with universality as a given, only to denounce it. At the same time, postcolonial studies have undertaken this critique through an analysis of subalternised agents against a specifically international or inter-societal backdrop of universal significance – colonial modernity – in order to demonstrate both its historical specificity and its heterogeneity. Yet, as Matin argues, this very emphasis on the interactive multiplicity of the international

‘requires a general conception of the social in general whose historical referent bursts the empirical bounds of any notion of the social in the singular’ (Matin 2013, 355). Without such a conception, postcolonialism has thus far failed to offer an alternative theorisation to Eurocentric conceptions of history.

When considered in this light, the explanatory contradiction between ‘Orientalist orthodoxy’ and the ‘new Ottomanists’ is rooted in a more fundamental methodological disjuncture between internalist and externalist modes of analysis, a problem common to classical sociology:

‘we find *dynamic* theorisations of *internal change* over historical time (the sequence of ancient, medieval and modern forms of society); and we find *comparative* theorisations of *external difference* across cultural space... What we do not find, however, is a drawing together of these dynamic and comparative moments of analysis in order to theorise a specifically inter-societal dimension of social change... For in the classical tradition, the interactive multiplicity of social development as a historical process does not enter into the formal theorisation of development itself’ (Rosenberg 2006, 312).

The hypothesis that will be explored over the course of this thesis is that the contradiction between old and new Ottoman historiography can be overcome by bridging the methodological gap between inside and outside. In this regard, International Relations – a discipline which is explicitly concerned with how internal and external factors relate to each other – potentially provides an alternative and fruitful disciplinary perspective that may help articulate an alternative, non-Eurocentric history of the Ottoman Empire. The next chapter will provide an overview of the Neorealist attempt to theorise the international, its weaknesses, and an alternative in the form of U&CD.

3. Mediating abstract and concrete: Uneven and Combined Development and ‘the international’

‘The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence the unity of the diverse’ Karl Marx, 1857

As we have seen, approaches to Ottoman history that deploy an international perspective have tended towards the Eurocentric prioritisation of Western modernity as the sole agent of change. In such accounts, the international is equated with Europe and the specificities of Ottoman agency are erased in historical explanation. We also saw that the attempt to challenge these approaches led to, in postcolonial approaches, a wholesale and equally problematic rejection of the universal as a category, and a subsequent retreat into internalist analysis. Insofar as the problematic divide between Eurocentric and non-Eurocentric historiography is underpinned by a division between externalist and internalist analysis respectively, overcoming this latter division may provide a way of addressing the former. In this chapter, I seek to weave through the limits of both internalist and externalist approaches, by proposing a broader theoretical framework that goes beyond the bounds of any historical and geographical specificity – a general theory of ‘the international’. But moreover, in resisting the Eurocentric tendencies of such an approach, I also argue that any such ‘universal’ theory must contain within it a sensitivity to sociological difference, and an ability to articulate specificity, be it geographical or historical. In short, the aim of this chapter is to construct a theory of the international that is capable of simultaneously grasping the universal and heterogeneous, the general and specific.

Any attempt to theorise the international must take as its starting point Kenneth Waltz's (1979) theory of international politics, arguably the most cogent, robust and influential international theory. In the first section, through an exploration of the methodological underpinnings of Waltz's work, I argue that Neorealism's ontological separation of inside from outside, its analytical emphasis on generality over specificity, and explanatory preference for elegance over complexity, severely limits its potential to provide a non-Eurocentric 'international' solution to the contradiction in Ottoman historiography. In section two, I propose that the methodological weaknesses in Waltz's work can be addressed through Marx's theory of abstraction. I argue that by moving away from the 'linear reading' of Marx's method and towards a 'method of internal relations', it is possible to open a theoretical 'window' for the integration of a hitherto missing 'spatial moment' in the historical materialist research programme. This spatial moment is ultimately provided by U&CD, which, I argue, can be deployed as a sociologically and historically grounded theory of international relations. Section three provides an outline of U&CD through its classical statement in Leon Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution* (2007). Section four explores the possibility of its extension beyond the Russian case as a general abstraction that captures its transhistorical prevalence. I argue that this is crucial to overcoming the problematic – and Eurocentric – identification of 'the international' with capitalist modernity.

3.1 Waltz's *problematique* of 'the international'

Waltz's exposition of structural realism in *Theory of International Politics* (Waltz 1979) remains to this day arguably the most influential theory of international relations. The enduring quality of Waltz's work is located in his critique of, and alternative to, reductionism – the tendency to explain international relations through factors found at national or subnational levels. In contrast, Waltz suggests that variations in the attributes of states cannot explain the 'striking sameness of international life

throughout the millennia' (Waltz 1979, 66; see also Gilpin 1986, 304–305). Consequently, it is only through grasping 'how [states] stand in relation to each other' (Waltz 1979, 64) that we can uncover the irreducibility of international politics. For Waltz, this structural dimension is characterised by 'the enduring anarchic character of international politics' (Waltz 1979, 66), in which states are unavoidably related, in terms of survival and power maximisation, rendering them functionally equivalent units (Waltz 1979, 97).

This 'structural' or 'scientific' realism is in many ways unrivalled in its comprehension of the international. Firstly, it identifies social multiplicity as a distinct field of causality, irreducible to domestic relations. Secondly, as a condition of the reproduction of these polities themselves, it captures the distinctive manner in which societies 'must provide answers to questions which, at their broadest, have a common form deriving from the general fact of geopolitical co-existence' (Rosenberg 2000, 81). It is structural realism's sensitivity to these determinations – largely ignored by classical social theory – that has given it remarkable staying power, even in the face of forceful accusations of reification (Ashley 1984, 248; Wendt 1987, 345) and theoretical vacuity (Callinicos and Rosenberg 2010, 177; Rosenberg 1994, 27).¹² However, these pertinent criticisms of Neorealism do expose a potential weakness: the universal condition of the international is conceptualised by obliterating and homogenising difference rather than articulating it. In what follows, I suggest that this problem in Neorealism stems from a particular method of *abstraction* and mode of *explanation*.

In order to construct theory, Waltz suggests that it is necessary to abstract from the cultural, economic, political, and military specificities of any given societies, as well as the specificities of interactions between them, in order to give 'the international' its distinctive conceptual determinacy (Waltz 1979, 80). *Abstraction* here serves to intentionally 'leave aside' (Waltz 1979, 10) questions (and thus answers) that

¹² Richard K. Betts is fond of quipping that 'realism is the worst theory of international relations – except for all the others' (Betts 2007)

relate to these ‘non-systemic’ features of social life that Waltz considers outside of the purview of international theory. Abstracting in this manner fundamentally involves ‘simplification’ (Waltz 1979, 10) and ‘elegance’ (Waltz 1979, 69). Such an emphasis gives rise to a particular understanding of *explanation*, where to explain is ‘to say why the range of outcomes falls within certain limits; to say why patterns of behaviour recur; to say why events repeat themselves’ (Waltz 1979, 69). Consequently, factors pertaining to any elements of social life that fall outside of these limits of repetition or recurrence are omitted *a priori* as non-systemic, untheorisable and hence outside of the explanatory reach of international theory (Teschke 2003, 16). Having abstracted the international system from unscientific variables in this way, the theoretical abstraction of ‘anarchy’ becomes ‘the primary *explanans*... from which all other relevant concepts... are to be deduced’ (Allinson and Anievas 2010b, 207). To put it in Rosenberg’s terms, it means turning geopolitics (and everything it sociologically involves) into an ‘extra- or even supra-sociological concept’ and treating it as a self-given ‘elemental datum’ (Callinicos and Rosenberg 2010, 163). In short, Waltz’s theory produces a reified conception of the international, constructed independent of any concrete history.

In the absence of any such ‘concretisation’, we are left with what has been described by Rosenberg as a ‘banal’ theory (Rosenberg 1994, 27), whose partial scope leaves ‘a series of hidden propositions and symptomatic silences’ (Rosenberg 1994, 30).¹³ With no room for unit level analysis, Neorealism explicitly rejects the possibility of societies changing the structural condition of anarchy in international relations. Quite openly then, Neorealism denies the possibility of historical change, emphasising instead ‘only a reproductive logic, but no transformational logic’ (Ruggie 1986, 151). Equally underappreciated in Waltz’s approach, is the extensive *hierarchy* in international relations (Hobson and Sharman 2005; Milner 1991) – in particular the histories of colonialism and imperialism that have underpinned the pre- and post-

¹³ For the sake of completeness, it is worth noting that Rosenberg has since tempered his stance on realism, albeit not his criticism of it (Rosenberg 2013b).

Westphalian international order (Hobson 2012, 205–210). The curiosity of Waltzian Neorealism is that without analysis of these factors we are left with an international theory, but one incapable of providing any sociological explanation; a theory of societal multiplicity, but one in which societal difference is homogenised and flattened rather than articulated (Hobson 2001, 16).

Yet despite this deficiency – or more correctly because of it – Waltz's approach would appear to 'solve' Eurocentrism's spatial separation of West and East, and temporal dichotomisation of tradition and modernity, by simply paving over the problem. Having treated such distinctions solely as specificities related to the internal cultural, political, economic and military forms of units, the issue is removed as a non-systemic factor outside of the realm of international theory. Distinctions between East and West are collapsed into the homogeneity of like units, and the specificities of tradition and modernity are flattened into a recurring structure of anarchy, thus obliterating the three Eurocentric assumptions outlined in Chapter Two (epistemological exteriority; ontological internalism; linear developmentalism). In this way, Waltz's strict avoidance of unit level analysis in favour of the international appears to dispose of the West-East, modern-tradition, dichotomy by creating another – a dichotomy of inside and outside (Walker 1993).

Such a move is problematic when considered against the work of Rob Walker, who situates the claims of IR theory within the historically specific context of modern conceptions of sovereignty. For Walker,

'...claims about political realism are an historically specific consequence of contradictory ontological possibilities expressed by the principle of state sovereignty, and not, as is so often asserted, an expression of ahistorical essences and structural necessities' (Walker 1993, 7).

These contradictory ontological possibilities include firstly, the ideational rise of a Cartesian notion of Self and Other, where the self-conscious ego is demarcated from the objective world of nature (Walker 1995, 321). Secondly, this informs a spatial separation of inside from outside, where inside constitutes the site of sovereignty,

community and legitimacy, and outside the tragic and contingent realm of anarchy (Walker 1993, 63). Thirdly, either side of this spatial demarcation is imbued with a distinct temporality, where inside is designated as the site of progress, and outside as the realm of recurrence and stasis (Walker 1993, 177). To extrapolate Walker's claims onto the preceding discussion of Ottoman historiography, the binaries of Self and Other (West and East), progress and repetition (modernity and tradition), inside and outside (domestic and international), are inextricably interlinked conceptual constructions specific to modernity. As such, rather than overcoming the ontology underpinning West-East, modern-tradition, dichotomies typical of Eurocentric analysis, Waltz actively, if unwittingly, reproduces it by reifying the separation of inside-outside. And, as we have seen in the postcolonial critique of Eurocentrism, any such conception of the international runs the risk of homogenising difference, and thus conflating universality with sameness. The 'functional equivalence' of 'like units' in Waltz's approach therefore provides few clues as to how we could overcome the Eurocentrism of externalist approaches to Ottoman history without simply reproducing the homogenous conception of the international. Equally, any international theory incapable of providing a reconceptualisation of 'the social' would inevitably have to cede this analytical ground to internalist approaches. In both cases the inside-outside dichotomy would be deferred rather than overcome and we would be no closer to solving the contradictory puzzle that dominates Ottoman historiography.

And yet, Waltz himself never discounted the possibility that these two social spheres could be tied together in sociological analysis, but insisted that, 'students of international politics will do well to concentrate on separate theories of internal and external politics until someone figures out a way to unite them' (Waltz 1986, 340). Despite this, one has to wonder how far a theory¹⁴ which explicitly omits internal factors from its ontology is capable of bridging this gap. The argument that I would like to advance is that we need a different method – one that produces a radically

¹⁴ A discipline-defining theory, no less (Hobden 1998, 10).

different conception of *abstraction* and *explanation* – in order to unpick this strict divide between inside and outside. Although Marx never systematically outlined his method, traces of his approach at work demonstrate that it is uniquely well suited to this task.

3.2 Marx's method of abstraction

Frederic Jameson's famous maxim 'always historicise' (Jameson 1981, 9) has long been a mainstay of Marxist approaches to sociological analysis. By demonstrating the extensive historical variability and specificity of central concepts such as anarchy and sovereignty, historicising has been at the heart of the most powerful Marxist inspired critiques of Neorealism in IR. And yet, Marxist approaches have suffered from an inability to provide an alternative theorisation of the international. Many early engagements tended to treat it as a practical problem within a broader revolutionary framework, rather than a theoretical one (Davenport 2011). Later approaches, situated explicitly within the discipline of IR, have fallen prey to the fallacy of the 'domestic analogy' (Bull 1966; for example, Teschke 2003; Wallerstein 1974) or posited the international in logically autonomous terms that have tended to reproduce 'proto-realist' (Rosenberg 2006, 313 fn. 9; Hobson 2006b) conceptions (for example, Callinicos 2010).¹⁵ In a mirror image of Neorealism's inability to deploy 'the international' in order to reconceptualise 'the social,' Marxist approaches have provided strong conceptions of 'the social' without conceptualising 'the international.' Consequently, historical materialist approaches have often replicated the Eurocentrism of other accounts, with an unbalanced focus on European history, and a firm prioritisation of Western agency (Bhambra 2011; Hobson 2012).

For Rosenberg, this inability stems from the ontological singularity of Marx's conception of the social (Rosenberg 2006, 311). In particular, although Marx's use of the various moments of capital accumulation proved an ingenious tool for uncovering

¹⁵ Both domestic analogy and proto-realism indicate the absence of a sociological definition of the international. Domestic analogy refers to the tendency to derive theorisations of the international from pre-existing 'internalist' theories and concepts. Proto-realism denotes the tendency to extra-add the international as an entity separate from the sociological, thus replicating non-sociological – realist – conceptions of the international.

the *temporal* pulse of capitalism's 'laws of motion' – 'the *process of capital's movement*' (Marx 1981, 117, emphasis added) – it did so by explicitly abstracting from the differentiated and multiple political spatiality of capitalism, 'in order to examine the object of our investigation in its integrity, free from all disturbing subsidiary circumstances' (Marx 1976, 727; cf. Rosenberg 2006, 311). However, in what follows, I seek to demonstrate that Marx's method left open the possibility of reintegrating this missing spatial moment into his general theoretical framework. There is therefore no fundamental methodological reason why Marx should have been unable to escape ontological singularity without collapsing into a proto-realist theorisation of the international. This section and what follows will seek to elaborate this claim with specific reference to Marx's method of abstraction.

Returning to Jameson's dictum, there is a justified tendency in Marxist approaches to treat transhistorical categories with trepidation. Marx was heavily critical of 'Robinsonades' for reifying historically specific social relations into natural and eternal phenomena that would then operate as general abstractions in political and economic theorisations. However, it has been widely and correctly noted that the use of 'general abstractions' has always played a key role for Marxists (Callinicos and Rosenberg 2010, 153; Fracchia 2004; Rosenberg 2000, 71–72; Sayer 1987, 21). Yet reflecting a lack of any systemic elaboration of precisely the role abstraction plays,¹⁶ there is no shortage of disagreement among Marxists over the procedure of this method. Nonetheless, it is possible to discern two contrasting interpretations: the linear reading and the internal relations reading.

The former view understands the 'ascent from abstract to concrete' as a linear process in which abstractions are progressively concretised through the generation of increasingly determinant concepts – a step by step concretisation (Callinicos 2009, 31; Elster 1978). This has been neatly termed by Harvey as the 'building block' approach,

¹⁶ Marx's references to abstraction are scattered and brief. For example, contrasting the study in *Capital* to a scientific experiment, Marx wrote '[i]n the analysis of economic forms... neither microscopes nor chemical reagents are of use. The force of abstraction must replace both' (Marx, 1976, p. 90). Similarly fleeting is Marx's claim that 'the method of advancing from the abstract to the concrete is simply the way in which thinking assimilates the concrete and reproduces it as a concrete mental category' (Marx, 1973, p. 101).

where fixed and immutable foundations of knowledge are established at the outset of investigation as axioms upon which all further analysis is built (Harvey 2006, 2). In this reading of Marx's method, the appropriate starting point is the general materialist conception of history, where 'the production of life... appears as a double relationship' between humans' relation to nature and humans' relation to each other (Marx and Engels 1970, 50). From this, Marx and Engels were able to derive the axiom that 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles' (Marx and Engels 1975, 40), which informed the 'classical statement' of historical materialism in *Capital Volume III*:

'The specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus labour is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of domination and servitude, as this grows directly out of production itself and reacts back upon it in turn as a determinant. On this is based the entire configuration of the economic community arising from the actual relations of production, and hence also its specific political form. It is in each case the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the immediate producers – a relationship whose particular form naturally corresponds always to a certain level of development of the type and manner of labour, and hence to its social productive power – in which we find the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social edifice, and hence also the political form of the relationship of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the specific form of state in each case' (Marx 1981, 927).

Consequently, the linear reading suggests that *Capital Volume I* begins with a detailed analysis of the commodity that strips away limited concepts such as use-value and exchange-value. In their place, Marx posits the 'labour theory of value' as a fixed building block that corresponds most closely to his general conception of historical materialism – the historically specific manifestation of the double relationship. In turn, all ensuing concepts effectively become derivatives or more concrete manifestations of the labour theory of value. The linear reading is given additional support by Marx's claim that the order of sociological analysis,

'obviously has to be (1) the general, abstract determinants which obtain in more or less all forms of society, but in the above-explained sense. (2) The categories which make up the inner structure of bourgeois society and on which the fundamental classes rest. Capital, wage labour, landed property. Their interrelation. Town and country. The three great social classes. Exchange between them. Circulation. Credit system (private). (3) Concentration of bourgeois society in the form of the state. Viewed in relation to itself. The 'unproductive' classes. Taxes. State debt. Public credit. The population. The colonies. Emigration. (4) The international relation of production. International division of labour. International exchange. Export and import. Rate of exchange. (5) The world market and crises' (Marx 1973, 108).

However, it has been convincingly shown that numerous difficulties of internal coherence (Harvey 2006, 3–4) and conceptual consistency (Ollman 2003, 30; Sayer 1987, 21) arise by treating Marx's method of ascent from abstract to concrete in this linear fashion. For our purposes, it is worth noting that such a view of Marx's method assumes that the theoretical hard-core – the general conception of the social; 'the general, abstract determinants which obtain in more or less all forms of society' – of Marx's research programme becomes fixed and immutable. If this premise is accepted, the research programme can only be subsequently added to by concretising already existing abstractions, or else by adding externally related *ad hoc* determinations at odds with the theoretical hard-core. This is significant for it implies that 'the international' – the dimension of spatial multiplicity – abstracted from by Marx in the first instance can only be integrated as a concretisation or *ad hoc* appendage. And when we look at attempts to develop a Marxist theory of the international, positions have tended to vacillate between these two forms of addition. Either the international is derived from pre-existing internalist concepts (domestic analogy), or it is extra-added as a separate logic (proto-realism). In both cases the otherwise ontologically singular general conception of society remains intact.

The second understanding of Marx's method – the 'internal relations' approach – takes its point of departure from a critique of the building block approach. It argues that, for Marx, all abstractions are inherently a partial representation of reality – of

the concrete – that are nonetheless necessary to isolate elements of the complexity of that reality and subject it to analysis. They are, in other words, a tool to mentally reconstruct the world; conceptual replicas of the elements of objective reality revealed by analysis; ‘a product of the reduction of the concrete in reality to its abstract abridged expression in consciousness’ (Ilyenkov 1982, 135). The partiality of abstractions means that each is inherently limited when conducting sociological analysis on their own. Marx was therefore highly critical of the tendency among ‘vulgar political economists’ to explain capitalism from meagre abstractions that reduced reality to ‘a few very simple characteristics, which are hammered out into flat tautologies’ (Marx 1973, 86).

For Marx, the problems of ‘vulgarity’, or ‘one-sidedness’, tend to emerge when an abstraction is hermetically separated from, and externally related to, the social conditions of its existence. Thus berating the ‘conceptual crudity’ (Marx 1973, 88) of Robinsonades who treated things as accidentally or reflectively related, Marx suggests that individual elements abstracted from society are too narrow to render capitalism intelligible. In contrast, for Marx, society expresses ‘the sum of interrelations, the relations within which these individuals stand’ (Marx 1973, 265), and the concrete is understood as ‘the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse’ (Marx 1973, 101). In order to bring out this diverse unity or interrelated sum, the intrinsic properties of ‘things in themselves’ are rendered intelligible through ‘their interconnections’ to the social conditions of their existence as ‘*organically* connected’ (Marx 1973, 88). Any abstracted moment of social reality – say, production, distribution, consumption or exchange – is always conceptualised in the ‘mutual interaction’ that ‘takes place between the different moments’ (Marx 1973, 100). Similarly, rather than treating capital ‘one-sidedly’ as externally and contingently related to wage-labour Marx argues that these are organically related poles of the *same* relation. If one side changes, so does the other, making the relation between the two poles ‘necessary’ and ‘internal’ (Ollman 2003, 25).

Such a method requires that conceptual abstractions involve not only how any given empirical phenomenon appears and functions, but also ‘how it develops’, wherein ‘its real history is also part of what it is’ (Ollman 2003, 65). This imbues Marx’s conceptual abstractions with an historicity (Sayer 1987, 21), where their content is not rigidly fixed, but ‘developed in their historical or logical process of formation’ (Marx and Engels 1977, 13–14; cited in Sayer 1987, 21).¹⁷ In *Capital Volume I*, the commodity is thus a bearer of the universal need to produce use-values *and* the historically specific conditions under which such production occurs (under the capitalist mode of production, this would be the production of exchange-values). Similarly, ‘labour’ is at once conceptualised as ‘concrete labour’ (the general feature of all human labour) and ‘abstract labour’ (the historically specific condition under which concrete labour takes place within capitalism).

Because the ‘key general concepts of historical materialism are necessarily open-ended and multi-referential, they cannot then officiate as the building-blocks’ (Sayer 1987, 23) of a free-standing explanatory theory. Unlike Waltz’s deductive method, where general categories are ‘applied in an unmediated way to the real world of international politics’ (Rosenberg 2000, 81), Marx’s abstractions do not provide on their own the concepts required for historical knowledge (Bernstein and Depelchin 1979, 6). Nor do they act as axioms from which secondary and tertiary concepts are derived, where concretisation takes place in a linear fashion from abstract to concrete. Instead, the object of study is continually reconstituted by viewing it through different contextual prisms, different analytical vantage points or ‘windows’. The view from any singular vantage point will tend to be ‘flat and lack perspective.’ But moving across different vantage points, those elements formerly hidden will come into view, reconstituting the interpretation of it with ‘greater depth and perspective’ (Harvey 2006, 2).

¹⁷ I would like to thank Luke Cooper for alerting me to the significance of this.

Used in this way, general abstractions are understood as ‘a guiding thread, an orientation for empirical and historical research, not a theoretical substitute for it’ (Sayer 1987, 13). Put differently, Marx’s abstractions are question begging – they serve the purpose of isolating objects of study, which in turn raise analytical questions that can only be answered through their connection to other abstracted moments. As such, Marx ‘explained’ by carving open analytical and theoretical spaces that would necessitate the introduction of – and relation to – additional explanatory determinations, derived from alternative vantage points. Hence, across *Capital* as a whole Marx repeatedly changed register and (re-)analysed social relations through different conceptual prisms, moving from the singular capitalist enterprise (Marx 1976), to circulation (Marx 1978), to many capitals (Marx 1981). More broadly, in his plan for the *Critique of Political Economy*, Marx outlined his aim to analyse capitalism from a variety of differing perspectives irreducible to capital alone: ‘I examine the system of bourgeois economy in the following order: *capital, landed property, wage-labour; the State, foreign trade, world market*’ (Marx 1904).

In *Capital*, each analytical shift of this kind served to ‘destroy the simplicity’ of anterior vantage points and ‘complicate their phenomenology’ (Bensaïd 2009, 106) by bringing them into interrelation with other abstracted moments. Through the disclosure of the internal relations between these expanding sets of abstracted moments, the *multiplicity* of concrete conditions and determinations pertaining to the capitalist mode of production was unearthed and reconstituted in thought. Marx’s explanation took place not by the reduction of social reality into a simplified and elegant abstraction, but by the expansion and complexification of the object under study. Thus, in contrast to Waltz’s method, an abstraction cannot be judged heuristically useful by what elements of concrete reality it successfully excludes, but by what elements of concrete reality are opened up for exploration. In short, rather than positing abstractions (such as, say, anarchy) as the *explanans* of social theory, general abstractions are *explananda* – things that require explanation. In contrast to the building block approach, concretisation does not occur by unidirectionally

applying any given abstraction onto an empirical case study. It is instead necessary to analyse the concrete from a multiplicity of abstractions; that is, deploy multiple vantage points in order to disclose the complexity of social relations.

This informs the present study in two ways. Firstly, such an approach necessarily works against the conceptualisation of inside-outside as hermetically separate and externally related. In Marx's schema, these would constitute two poles of the same relation, viewed from different vantage points. By removing the methodological source of this antinomy, the possibility of reconnecting an international perspective with a conceptualisation of the social can be opened. Secondly, the related strict epistemological distinctions between West and East would also need to be rethought. Thirdly, any conception of the universal would be fundamentally different to the homogenous and undifferentiated conceptions we find in Neorealism (or Modernisation Theory and WST). In contrast, an internal relations reading of Marx's approach would necessitate that the (re)view of any given universal category from alternative vantage points would involve an elaboration and reconstitution of that category as a whole. 'It is impossible' writes Harvey, 'to work on one "empty box" without simultaneously working on all other aspects' (Harvey 2006, xxix).

3.3 Trotsky's innovation – Uneven and Combined

Development

However, in spite of Marx's great methodological attentiveness to the interpenetration of universality and heterogeneity, this was not translated into an international theory. As shown above, the primary focus in his existing work was on theorising the temporal pulse of the capitalist mode of production (its 'laws of motion'), rather than on understanding how this temporality was spatially manifested. Although a glance at Marx's 'plan' indicates that there were spatial components of the capitalist mode of production - 'the State, foreign trade, world market' – that required further study,

these abstracted spatial moments were never fully and explicitly reintegrated into the overall theoretical framework (Harvey 2001; Rosenberg 2006).

The task of addressing this spatial lacuna has received renewed impetus following recent explorations of Trotsky's theory of U&CD. Trotsky's theory originated precisely in response to Marxist theorising that had by the time of the Second International become dominated by the unilinear, stadial and homogenous notion of development (Trotsky 1969, 131) which took too literally Marx's claim that: '*De te fabula narratur!*'¹⁸ For Trotsky, the vulgarity of Second International linear developmentalism was starkly exposed by the 'enigma' of the Russian revolution, 'the fact that a backward country was the first to place the proletariat in power' (Trotsky 2007, 20). His starting point was therefore an inversion of the stadial vulgarisation of Marx's claim that England showed 'to the less developed, the image of its own future' (Marx 1976, 91). In contrast Trotsky argued, 'England in her day revealed the future of France, considerably less of Germany, but not in the least of Russia and not of India' (Trotsky 2007, 1227). Rather than leading to social homogenisation, Trotsky insisted that the tendency of capitalism to intrude on local particularity, and bring all societies within its totalising logic, produced a variegated plurality of social forms, none compelled to follow the same path of development. In other words, 'history was indeed becoming universal but through different processes' (Knei-Paz 1978, 88). In turn, questions on the composition of a society were to be answered by uncovering these different processes – that is, the peculiarities of a particular society's socio-historical development. The solution of the Russian enigma was to be sought 'in the peculiarities of the backward country – that is, in its differences from other countries' (Trotsky 2007, 20). In a nutshell, Trotsky was arguing for conception of the universal articulated through heterogeneity and developmental differences (Matin 2013, 368).

¹⁸ 'The tale is told of you!' Marx used this phrase in the 1867 preface to the German edition of *Capital* Volume I, to suggest that his theorisation of capitalism, despite being based on the English experience, was equally applicable to Germany. For although Germany was yet to experience the sort of economic development seen in England, Marx argued 'the country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future' (Marx, 1976, p. 90).

Trotsky's approach therefore began with the empirical observation that a multiplicity of societies varying in size, culture, political organisation, material and non-material productivity is a transhistorical feature of human history, its 'most general law' (Trotsky 2007, 28). From this empirical observation, Trotsky was able to infer the quantitative (multiple societies) and qualitative (different societies) character of social development (Rosenberg 2007, 452; Rosenberg 2013a, 576) – what he termed *uneven development*. In the most basic sense, this denoted the developmental variations across societies and the attendant spatial differentiations between them. Hence for Trotsky, 'Russia stood not only geographically, but also socially and historically, between Europe and Asia' (Trotsky 2007, 26). From the more advanced West came the productive lessons of feudalism, but without the Roman ruins upon which the economic and cultural concentration of commercial cities could be built. From the East came Russia's 'Tartar yoke.' But, in contrast to Egyptian, Indian, and Chinese Empires, Russia managed to escape the condition of relative isolation and self-sufficiency (Trotsky 2007, 26). Due to Russia's 'backwardness' in contrast to the more advanced West,¹⁹ it could never settle into relatively stable social relations; it was always compelled through military and economic pressure to take up the West's developmental discoveries. Yet at the same time, it could never shed its 'Tartar yoke' and fully emulate its Western neighbours; the desolate plain inherited from its nomadic predecessors gave the Russian social formation a diluted and formless character, and a slow tempo of development, what Trotsky would define as the most general trait of Russian history (Trotsky 2007, 25).

In this way, unevenness also denoted the peculiar local sociological forms of internal differentiation in institutional, cultural and class relations (Cooper 2012, 6). Thus, from the general condition of unevenness, Trotsky was able to telescope into the concrete content of Russian slow development, noting the imbalances both between Russian town and countryside (Trotsky 2007, 474) and between state and

¹⁹ Trotsky's use of the terms 'advanced' and 'backward' relates entirely to historically specific material conditions, and not any essential characteristics of societies. In this thesis, where these terms are used in relation to U&CD, I follow Trotsky's approach.

society (Trotsky 2007, 476) in contrast to European forms. While craft-guilds and merchants were separated from the peasantry in Western Europe, the 'meagreness' of Russian feudalism entailed an absence of urban commerce and craft. Nomadic merchants and handicrafts were instead 'inseparably bound up with its peasant environment' (Trotsky 2007, 29; 474). This coalesced with the despotism of the Russian state, which 'swallowed up a far greater proportion of the people's wealth' (Trotsky 2007, 28), thus prohibiting the possibility of the emergence of an autonomous indigenous bourgeoisie that could spearhead capitalist development.

Trotsky's conceptualisation of societal differentiation and multiplicity remained heavily informed by Marx's method; relations of unevenness between societies were treated as internal and necessary, rather than external and contingent. Consequently, Trotsky emphasised that relations of unevenness created structural conditions of competitiveness between more advanced societies and less developed ones. Thus, countering the stadial notion that Russia was a society like any other, Trotsky claimed Russia could not repeat the Western experience because its own development took place in an international context, itself transformed by the antecedent emergence and expansion of capitalism. This meant that Russian development did not occur endogenously but through two specifically international causal determinations. The first – 'the whip of external necessity' (Trotsky 2007, 28) – meant that Russian development occurred under the pressure, influence, and lessons of other capitalist societies. The second – 'the privilege of historic backwardness' (Trotsky 2007, 27) – meant that the adoption of the capitalistic methods involved taking 'finished product' rather than repeating the developmental steps needed to get there.

The differential development of unevenness therefore occurred not hermetically and autonomously, but interactively; developmentally differentiated societies constantly impacted upon one another's development. Bringing out the relational character of this differentiation, Trotsky argued that 'from the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of *combined development*' (Trotsky 2007, 28). As with unevenness,

combination has a strong empirical referent (Rosenberg 2006, 319; Wolf 1982, 18) – multiple societies do not simply exist hermetically side by side; they interactively coexist, which, by necessity (and with varying degrees), determines the production and reproduction of societies. At the most abstract level combined development theorises this empirical fact.

Trotsky's sociological explanations are consequently imbued with processes in which societies draw 'together different stages of the journey', combining the spatio-temporally variegated experiences of societies into amalgams of 'archaic with more contemporary forms' (Trotsky 2007, 28). In Trotsky's *History* we find numerous examples in which the 'backward' Russia attempted to developmentally 'catch up' with a more advanced Europe, by making use of the latter's pre-existing developmental achievements. The 'privilege' of Russia's backwardness entailed a 'skipping over intermediate steps' (Trotsky 2007, 476) of development, ensuring attempts at catch up did not follow the same paths of antecedent development (Trotsky 2007, 27). Russian industry was able to take on the latest techniques of the most advanced nations and leap over the stage of craft-guilds and manufacture that its pre-existing social relations precluded. Accordingly, Russian industry developed with extraordinary and historically unprecedented speed, imbuing the development of Russian capitalism with a peculiar form, thus perpetuating its relation of unevenness with societies on other paths of capitalist development (Trotsky 2007, 31).

In tracing these forms of combination, Trotsky was able to develop an explanation for the peculiarities of Russian *development*. Under the structural pressures of capitalist geopolitical competition, the Russian ruling class was pressed into the paradoxical position of incorporating a form of social organisation that at once strengthened their international autonomy whilst undermining the social base of their power (Trotsky 1969, 44). Rapid industrialisation provided the resources to strengthen both domestic ruling apparatus and international defence and expansion, while simultaneously creating an exceptionally reactionary bourgeoisie dependent on Tsarist modernisation (Trotsky 2007, 35). Yet, it also undermined the economic

dominance of the countryside and the base of the nobility's power, with the emergence of a formally free but discontented peasantry (Trotsky 2007, 34–35). Most significantly, Russian industrialisation created a large, concentrated, militant and ultimately revolutionary proletariat (Trotsky 2007, 33–34). The intersection of Tsarist-bourgeois forces on the one hand, and proletariat-peasantry on the other, made the skipping of a bourgeois revolution, and the priority of a proletarian revolution an exceptional possibility in Russia.

By deploying U&CD in this way, Trotsky was able to uncover the contradictory and complex 'concentration of many determinations' (Marx 1973, 101) that ultimately led to a trajectory of development in which proletarian revolution took place in Russia – economically the most backward and ideologically the most reactionary European state. Yet despite the emphasis on Russia in the most explicit and systemic treatment of U&CD, Trotsky argued that U&CD had a considerably wider empirical application, capable of theorising the universal subsumption of pre-capitalist societies under the logic of capitalism writ large. Conceived from the perspective of internal relations, U&CD therefore involved a fundamental retheorisation of the capitalist mode of production, away from the stagism of the Second International, towards a multilinear framework.

Recent extensions of U&CD have sought to press Trotsky's rethinking of the capitalist mode of production even further, by arguing that the multilinearity of U&CD necessitates a reconceptualisation of historical materialism in its entirety (Callinicos and Rosenberg 2010; Matin 2007; Matin 2012; Matin 2013; Rosenberg 2006; Rosenberg 2007; Rosenberg 2010; Rosenberg 2013a; Rosenberg 2013b; Rosenberg 2008). Drawing on the prevalence of interactive societal multiplicity in accounts of World History, Rosenberg argues that U&CD is a transhistorically observable phenomenon. Once this empirical fact is tied into Trotsky's theorisation – 'unevenness is the most general law of all history' – U&CD offers a general abstraction that removes the antinomy of inside and outside by incorporating determinations that arise from the international as an intrinsic property of all social development. Indeed, for Rosenberg,

‘[I]t becomes apparent that any conception of society, or social development, which did not specify it as uneven and hence politically multiple would be an abstraction which had excised a very major and near-universal component of its real-world object’ (Rosenberg 2008, 8).

3.4 General applicability or historical specificity?

And yet the extension of Trotsky’s theory is far from a simple or uncontentious issue. While most criticisms have been sympathetic to U&CD when situated solely in the capitalist mode of production, they have been skeptical of its extension beyond (Allinson and Anievas 2010b; Ashman 2010; Davidson 2009). Although these criticisms generally have all pointed in the direction of historical specificity, they have usually begun from two different starting points. On the one hand, the extension of U&CD has been criticized for offering a ‘vapid’ (Elster 1986, 54) theory which leads to the trivial claim that all societies exhibit some form of amalgamation. ‘If,’ writes Neil Davidson, ‘everywhere is subject to U&CD then it clearly *explains* nothing’ (Davidson 2009, 19). Similarly Neil Smith argues that ‘a law that explains absolutely “everything in the world”’ explains nothing, and the fact that ‘nothing develops evenly’, used as a philosophical justification for such a law, reduces it to triviality’ (Smith 2006, 182).

On the other hand, Sam Ashman seeks to show that Rosenberg’s use of U&CD is guilty of doing the conceptual leg work of both general abstractions and more determinate categories at the same time (Ashman 2010, 193). Used in this way, U&CD tends to miss historical specificity – the differences between modes of production and the transformations that result from their change. In contrast, Ashman argues that it is only out of the social transformations brought about by the capitalist mode of production – the subsumption of labour to capital, competitive accumulation, capitalist expansion and the creation of the world market – that the phenomenon of U&CD emerges (Ashman 2010, 194). She therefore suggests that U&CD is only usefully employed when assisting in the mediation from the more abstract ‘mode of

production’ to the more concrete ‘social formation’ under conditions of capitalist production (Ashman 2010, 185).

Similarly, for Alex Callinicos (2009; 2010), U&CD is only intelligible as an emergent property of capitalist social relations, namely, capitalist competition. Capitalists appropriate surplus value, where the search for differential profits is a prime motive for technological innovation. A capitalist that introduces a labour saving technique is able to reduce the costs of production below the average level and thereby gain a super-profit, either by leaving the price of the output unchanged, or by lowering the price to gain additional market share. Other capitalists subsequently will tend to copy the innovation in order to defend their market share, thereby reducing the innovator’s advantage and super-profit, and in the process raising the organic composition of capital and lowering the general rate of profit. Thus, ‘technological innovation induced by competition among capitals is... a force at once of equalisation and of differentiation’ (Callinicos 2009, 89) – a force that is, moreover, the hallmark of U&CD.

What unites both Ashman’s and Callinicos’ criticism is an admirable defence of ‘mode of production’ as the ‘guiding abstraction’ (Allinson and Anievas 2010b, 208) of historical materialist analysis. Each criticism however heavily depends on a ‘building block’ or ‘linear’ reading of Marx’s method. Thus, Callinicos argues that Marx ‘moves from the abstract determinations – the commodity and money – at the start of the first volume to the comprehension of the system as a whole developed in the course of Volume III’ (Callinicos 2005, 47), through ‘the progressive and successive introduction of more complex determinations’ (Callinicos 2009, 31). Ashman argues that we can *only* illuminate a phenomenon such as U&CD with a theory of the particular mode of production in question, its relations and dynamics – that is, through ‘more determinant abstractions’ (Ashman 2010, 184) which are introduced ‘step by step’ (Ashman 2010, 192).

If we recall the discussion of Marx’s method, the building block approach has two potentially damaging consequences. Firstly, it assumes that the content of a mode of production as an abstraction is complete and pre-established, where the only

additions to our conception of it can be made through its concretisation. Consequently, both Ashman and Callinicos argue that U&CD can only be integrated at a more concrete level of abstraction that follows on from *Capital Volume III* – the competitive relation between capitals (Ashman 2010, 190; Callinicos 2009, 89). Sealing mode of production as an abstraction in this way opens a problem in Callinicos' exposition; for the geopolitical determinations of U&CD are concretised in their entirety from the anterior abstraction of intra-capitalist competition. How this concretisation occurs is through the assumption that the economic logic simply 'carries over to the political' (Callinicos 2010, 23). All of this amounts to a deductive leap of faith²⁰ that either collapses the political and economic into one another (Hobson 2012, 116), or leaves them externally related as 'two logics' (Pozo-Martin 2006, 236).

Secondly, the building block approach precludes the possibility that the concretisation of U&CD could reconstitute anterior abstractions in any way. Both Ashman and Callinicos admit that the introduction of U&CD has 'important spatial implications' (Callinicos 2009, 89) – namely the interactive societal multiplicity of capitalism – but do so without a concomitant retheorisation of anterior abstractions in light of this concretisation. By leaving U&CD untheorised, the original abstraction – mode of production – remains ontologically singular. So while Ashman and Callinicos would readily claim that 'historical materialism's guiding abstraction ("modes of production") in no way logically presupposes society in the ontologically singular' (Allinson and Anievas 2010b, 208), they do not explicate – to paraphrase Rosenberg – *why it must be ontologically multiple* (Callinicos and Rosenberg 2010, 157). This in turn results in the peculiar occlusion of the study of international relations beyond the capitalist mode of production. The question remains: how do we grasp a societal phenomenon that preceded capitalism – the fact of societal multiplicity – with categories specific to capitalism alone?

²⁰ One fundamentally at odds with the non-deductive process of concretisation Callinicos himself advocates (Callinicos 2010, 20–21).

The very evasion of this question leaves the historically and theoretically narrow version of U&CD open to the charge of Eurocentrism. John Hobson suggests that U&CD, insofar as it is identified with capitalism, is no less guilty of conflating ‘the international’ with exclusively ‘intra-European relations’. It thus tends to fall prey to the typical Eurocentric assumption of ‘Western priority and Eastern passivity’ (Hobson 2011, 153). Similarly, Gurminder Bhambra suggests that for all of U&CD’s focus on societal difference, its very origins and dynamism remains wedded to a Eurocentric conception of capitalism derived from the Enlightenment conception of stadial development (Bhambra 2011, 676). For Burak Tansel, so long as U&CD is considered to be specific to capitalist modernity, and this capitalist modernity is attributed to European origins, then U&CD appears no different to the diffusionist claims of Modernisation Theory and WST (Tansel 2012a, 11). In short, without problematising the European origins of capitalism, the non-West remains excluded as an empirically significant, yet theoretically secondary entity (Bhambra 2010, 128, 135; Bhambra 2011, 668, 673; Tansel 2012a, 10–12). For U&CD to simply invoke inter-societal processes is therefore not enough. It must also be capable of establishing an alternative conception of capitalism that includes the historical significance of non-European societies as active agents, while departing from a stadial conception of development. I will return to this question of the relationship between U&CD and capitalism in more detail in Chapters Five and Six. But for the time being it is worth noting the intimate relationship between the building block approach, the historically limited conception of U&CD, and the tendency towards Eurocentric approaches.

Is there an alternative? In response to this narrow approach, Rosenberg situates U&CD as an *internally related* component of mode of production analysis, by arguing that it fundamentally reconceptualises the Marxist conception of development – the theoretical hard core of the general materialist conception of history – by ‘reuniting Trotsky’s predicates with Marx’s subject’ (Rosenberg 2010, 179). As we saw, Marx’s and Engels’ general conception of materialist history rests on an understanding of development in terms of the production and reproduction of material life through an

interactive relation with nature on the one hand, and with interactive relations with other human beings on the other. Rosenberg claims that in this double relationship, we also find ‘the largest single source of uneven development’ (Rosenberg 2010, 180). Going back to ‘pre-political’ social formations of hunter gatherer bands, Rosenberg identifies an ‘enormous variety’ of natural conditions – climatic, topographical, ecological – that human beings engaged with in order to reproduce themselves. Due to the variation in socio-ecological conditions in which hunter gatherer bands developed, there was also significant unevenness in the respective productive, intellectual and cultural adaptation to those conditions. This variety in turn determined the conditions under which the interactive social reproduction – trade, periodic gatherings, and exogamous biological reproduction – took place. The double relationship behind social development was, from the very start, circumscribed by social relations that were uneven and combined. U&CD thus radically reconceptualises the universal characteristic of social development as ontologically multiple and interactive.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has argued for an understanding of U&CD based on the two moments of Marx’s method of abstraction. The first sees U&CD as a general abstraction, not as an alternative to, or juxtaposed with, mode of production analysis, but an *internally related* ‘spatial moment’. Once incorporated, the predicates of U&CD radically complicate the subject of mode of production analysis, destroying the simplicity of temporal ‘laws of motion’ conceived in the ontological singular. This reconceptualises the ontology of ‘the universal’ as the interactive coexistence of multiple and developmentally differentiated societies. This ontologically heterogeneous conception of universality in turn provides a firmer theoretical ground from which the particularities of societies can be articulated and explained. Rather than analysing the temporal pulse of a society’s development from the *singular* vantage point of internal

social relations, historical processes are reconceptualised as the outcome of a *multiplicity of spatially diverse nonlinear causal chains* that combine in any given conjuncture. What this compels historians and sociologists to do methodologically is to analyse history from a multiplicity of spatio-temporal vantage points – overlapping ‘spatio-temporal vectors of uneven and combined development’ (Anievas 2012) – in order to uncover these causal chains.

Secondly, this chapter has argued that as a general abstraction, U&CD is question begging and therefore heuristically useful in its ability to identify *explananda* – elements of social reality that need explanation. Moreover it has shown that without incorporating the *explanans* identified by U&CD, a full theoretical understanding of any given mode of production or historical explanation of any social formation is fundamentally restricted. These, I hope to show, are far from trivial claims. Indeed, Trotsky demonstrates that the enigma of Russia’s peculiar and hence differentiated development only becomes a significant question for sociological analysis when viewed from the universal perspective of U&CD. In the same way, I hope to show that U&CD will help us crack the puzzle of Ottoman history by introducing a determination – the international – that has persistently been left untheorised by Ottomanists.

Taking these two components of Marx’s method of abstraction together, this chapter has argued for a transhistorical extension of U&CD, which I suggest offers a theoretically and empirically generative alternative to extant approaches.²¹ It is theoretically generative in that it offers a way to rethink mode of production analysis in a way that it becomes capable of theorising a field of determinations, conditions and social relations hitherto considered contingent, and outside of its theoretical remit. Extending U&CD in this manner provides an alternative conception of development to the stadial and linear developmentalist thinking that has been widely associated with mode of production analysis. *Contra* Bhabra’s criticism that U&CD

²¹ The terminology used here serves to draw the similarities between Marx’s method, and Imre Lakatos’ methodology of research programmes (Lakatos 1978). For specific references of this method to U&CD see Burawoy (Burawoy 1989).

theoretically reproduces the strong stagism of Enlightenment thinking, it rather presupposes stagism as its very object of critique in order to ‘*scramble and subvert it*’ (Anievas and Nişancıoğlu 2013, 86).

For this purpose, the extension of U&CD is rich with potential for addressing the theoretical gaps of existing interpretations of the Ottoman Empire. By reconceptualising the general character of social development in terms of interactive multiplicity, U&CD offers a theorisation of the international that avoids the homogenising effects of both Eurocentrism and Neorealism. This involves disaggregating universality from homogeneity, where universality does not consist of the ‘immanent self-transcendence of the particular’, but is instead conceived as ‘interactive and heterogeneous’ (Matin 2013, 356). Through such an approach, any equation of universalisation with *linear developmentalist* processes of social homogenisation would be persistently ‘subverted and scrambled.’ This alternative conception identifies differentiation and interrelation within a whole as the universal condition of human societies (Rosenberg 2006, 328). In this way, U&CD represents a theoretical advance on the internalist modes of analysis covered in the preceding chapter and the externalism of Neorealism, Modernisation Theory and WST, for it internalises at the level of theory a dimension of social reality hitherto considered external to both – the international and the domestic respectively.

In turn, an analytical ‘window’ is thereby opened, from which it is possible to reassess the sort of *epistemological exteriority* that dichotomously opposes Western modernity to Eastern tradition. Trotsky’s own analysis of Russia demonstrates that East and West, contemporary and archaic, would no longer appear as hermetic and disparate social forms, externally and contingently related, but as inherently interactive and co-constitutive. So long as the conditions for their development are determined by their relations with each other, any emphasis on *ontological singular* and thus static essentialist characteristics would need to be reconsidered. Addressing these three features, I argue, can overcome the problematic contradiction in Ottoman studies. I do so with a focus on each of these features – ontological singularity,

epistemological exteriority and linear developmentalism – over the course of the next three chapters.

4. The Classical Age and the tributary mode: theorising Ottoman state formation

Conceptualising the Ottoman Empire's classical form is an especially apposite historical ground on which we can begin testing the theoretical claims made in the preceding two chapters. In Chapter Two, we saw that scholars have been divided on whether the Ottoman Empire was epistemologically commensurable with European history, or whether it was necessary to comparatively differentiate it from the European experience through reference to its *sui generis* characteristics. In short, this historiography is characterised by a seemingly contradictory opposition of 'universal' (typically a byword for European) and 'particular' (Gülalp 1995). In the case of the Ottoman 'Classical Age' this opposition is uniquely pronounced, with scholars divided over whether this period should be theorised through the *universal* category of feudalism, applied beyond the typical European case (Berktaş 1987; Berktaş 1990; Haldon 1991; Haldon 1993), or whether the Ottoman Empire was modally distinct – *particular* – and closer to Marx's Asiatic mode of production (İslamoğlu-Inan and Keyder 1977; Keyder 1976; Keyder 1987).

At the heart of these debates are certain social relations identified as crucial to understanding the Ottoman Empire – a division between the ruling *askeri* class and the ruled peasant *reaya* class on the one hand; and an intra-ruling class division between central and provincial elites on the other. What none of these accounts have offered is an appropriate explanation for their formation, that is, how they came into being. By simply presupposing the existence of these social relations, they problematically set up a static and 'ideal-type' picture of the Ottoman Empire that fails to understand social relations as a dynamic process of 'becoming.' Consequently, these accounts tend to reproduce the more general problem identified in Chapter Two. The Ottoman Empire is considered either through an *ontologically singular* and

homogenous conception of pre-capitalist societies derived from the European form, or it is understood in entirely particularist terms as *epistemologically distinct and exterior* to Europe. That is, the choice between feudal and Asiatic, universal and particular, has been entirely framed by the spatial vantage point – ‘Western’ or ‘Eastern’ – adopted by the historian. In both cases the core assumptions of Eurocentric analysis loom large.

Much of the literature on the Ottoman mode of production was produced prior to the renewal (and revision) of Ottoman historiography discussed in Chapter Two. And yet, while new historical insights have been gleaned from outside the typical Eurocentric framework, these have yet to be systematically incorporated into an alternative theory of the Ottoman classical age. At the same time, our pre-existing theoretical presuppositions have yet to be reassessed against the new material produced by these recent historiographical trends. This chapter seeks to address this gap. I argue, in particular, that recent historical insights on the origins of the Ottoman Empire reveal new insights on how to characterise the social relations of the Ottoman Empire, in a way that moves beyond not only the essentialist and culturalist emphasis on Islam, but also the feudal-Asiatic, universal-particular, West-East, opposition present in historical materialism. Using the theory of U&CD I argue that rejecting the image of the pre-capitalist Empire as a self-enclosed society demonstrates that key elements of Ottoman society – the *reaya-askeri* division and centre-province distinction – were products of, and responses to, international determinations. This, in turn, requires that we reconsider how to theorise the mode of production that pertained in the Ottoman Empire. Such an endeavour, I argue, must overcome the homogenising effects of the universal feudal thesis and the particularism of the Asiatic mode, and offer a theorisation of the classical Ottoman age free from hitherto prevalent Eurocentric assumptions of ontological singularity and epistemological exteriority.

In the first part of this chapter, I will critically appraise attempts to theorise the Ottoman Empire, by looking at debates conducted around the conceptualisation of pre-capitalist modes of production. I argue that attempts to characterise the Ottoman

Empire as Asiatic, feudal and tributary have tended to fall short of capturing the complexity and dynamism of its social history. I argue that this is a product of the internalism of these accounts – their omission of international determinations and how such determinations impacted upon the process of Ottoman state formation. In turn, I argue that an articulation of the tributary form of U&CD can provide us with an alternative theorisation of the Ottoman Empire's origins.

In the second part of this chapter, I seek to 'cash in' these theoretical claims, by analysing the significance of uneven and combined forms of development that fed into the origins of the Ottoman Empire. I argue that by tracing the spatially differentiated multiplicity of historical determinations that arose in Anatolia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it is possible to show that the key elements of the Ottoman social formation identified by Marxist approaches – the *reaya-askeri* division and centre-province distinction – were products of international determinations. Put differently, I will show how Ottoman state formation, and the formation of the tributary mode, was fundamentally determined by how the Ottomans negotiated relations with multiple societies in the medieval Anatolian context. I argue that this offers superior understanding of not only the formation of the Ottoman state, but also the mode of production in the Ottoman Empire during the Classical Age.

4.1 Modes of Production in the Ottoman Empire

The understanding of the Ottoman Empire as distinctly non-European has largely been derived from the extensive work conducted by the empiricist historians Ömer Lütfi Barkan (1937; 1964; 1975a) and Halil İnalcık (1955; 1964; 1972; 1992; 2000), both of whom argued that the Ottoman Empire was not feudal. Yet, despite denying the presence of feudalism, neither İnalcık's nor Barkan's work was accompanied by a systematic theorisation of what feudalism was, or what an alternative

characterisation of Ottoman society might be.²² The most substantive attempt to give Ottoman history a theoretical articulation took place in the debates²³ among Marxist historians from the 1960s onwards.²⁴

For proponents of the Asiatic mode there were three principal points that distinguished the Ottoman Empire from feudal Europe. Firstly, it was argued that because military fiefs – *timars* – were allocated and administered by the state, fief holders – *sipahis* – could not exercise private judicial rights over the *reaya* peasantry, control the production process (İslamoğlu-Inan and Keyder 1977, 38), or obtain fiscal freedom from the state like their European counterparts (Divitçioğlu 1967, 34). In the absence of these features, the sort of hereditary and autonomous magnate class between peasant and state typical of European feudalism could not emerge (Divitçioğlu 1967, 34). Lacking subinfeudation, the centralised state and its functionaries constituted a ruling class that directly exploited the peasantry. Secondly, unlike European feudalism, demesne production through compulsory labour services was exceptional within a generalised system of taxes (Divitçioğlu 1980, 10). Instead, the state tended to intervene in the production process by restraining (or at least fixing) the rate of exploitation, thus constraining local tax collectors and upholding peasant ‘freedom’ (Divitçioğlu 1967, 45–46). As such, the state in the Asiatic mode acted not simply as a political superstructure, but also the determining factor in the division of labour, class formation and surplus appropriation. Thus in contrast to the parcellised and decentralised form of political authority that characterised European feudalism (Anderson 1996, 147–148), it was the unitary presence of a centralised state acting as a ruling class that was the defining feature of the Asiatic Mode of Production (and Ottoman social formation).

In contrast to the Asiatic mode, proponents of the ‘Ottoman feudalism thesis’ sought to avoid what they considered the ‘legalistic myths’ (Haldon 1993, 159) of the

²² The one possible exception is İnalçık’s ‘Comments on Sultanism’ which deployed Weber’s typology to the Ottoman case. But even here, İnalçık only used Weber’s categories to articulate a descriptive presentation of Ottoman state and society (İnalçık 1992).

²³ I would like to thank Yavuz Tuyuoglu for encouraging me to engage with these debates.

²⁴ Although not exclusively – notable earlier theorisations were undertaken by İsmail Hüsrev Tökin (1934) and Hüseyin Avni Şanda (1975)

Asiatic approach. In particular, they denied the possibility of making modal distinctions on the basis of political specificities related to the state and law. Marxist Ottomanists working with the concept of feudalism instead focussed on the specific form of surplus appropriation of a semi-free peasantry by a ruling class of notables that took place through extra-economic means (legal, political, customary, religious-ideological) (Nalbantoğlu 1978, 65–66). On this basis they tended to emphasise the relation of exploitation implied in the prevalence of *timar* military fiefs, which granted *sipahi* soldiers the right to exploit the *reaya* peasantry through taxation, in return for military service to the Sultan. For Behice Boran, the existential experience of the *reaya* in this regard was essentially no different to European serfs – despite some differences they were effectively different members of the same category (Boran 1968, 15–26). Similarly emphasising the stratified class structure that undergirded the Ottoman land system, Korkut Boratav argued that this was understood as the opposition of feudal overlordship with small production (Boratav 1983). Following these themes, Doğan Avcıoğlu suggested that the relative centralisation of the Ottoman *political form* was outside of, and therefore irrelevant to a conceptualisation of feudalism as an *economic structure*. Despite the absence of subinfeudation, the relationship between *sipahi* and *reaya* was functionally equivalent to its counterpart in feudal Europe (Avcıoğlu 1968, 15–16). In sum, according to these characterisations of feudalism, the Ottoman Empire did not diverge from medieval Europe sufficiently to justify a modal distinction.

4.1.1 *The ‘universal feudalism’ thesis*

These observations have been given their most substantive theoretical articulation through the ‘universal feudalism’ thesis, as advanced by Halil Berktaş (1987; 1990) and John Haldon (1991; 1993).²⁵ Drawing on the building block interpretation of Marx, their central methodological claim is that a distinction should be drawn between ‘mode of

²⁵ It is worth noting that Haldon replaced the term feudal (Haldon 1991) with tributary (Haldon 1993). But for all intents and purposes they remain synonymous and interchangeable concepts (Haldon 1993, 10).

production' as an abstract ideal-type, and 'social formation' as a concrete 'really existing' society (Haldon 1993, 42–44; 52–57). This allows them to develop Marx's argument that the mode of production – 'the same economic basis' – can 'due to innumerable different empirical circumstances' exhibit 'infinite variations and gradations in appearance' at the level of social formation (Marx 1981, 927). For both authors, the economic basis of feudalism therefore resided in the form of exploitation (Haldon 1993, 91–93), and more specifically, in the juxtaposition of a ruling aristocracy exploiting a class of peasant direct producers through extra-economic means (Berktaý 1987, 311). Thus for Haldon, 'both sides of the couplet tax/rent are, in fact, expressions of the politico-juridical forms that surplus appropriation takes, not distinctions between different modes' (Haldon 1993, 77). For Berktaý, 'political decentralisation... is a superstructural feature. Thus no clear cut *economic* differences of a primary nature can be pinpointed between Western feudalism and Ottoman society – both were based on peasant production' (Berktaý 1990, 4). Consequently, the precise nature of these extra-economic means – whether tax or rent – constitute empirical and superstructural variations of this same mode of surplus appropriation. Such variations are therefore only ascertainable through the historically specific analytical level of social formation.

However, Haldon's and Berktaý's insistence on the distinction between mode of production and social formation (and equivalently economic base and political superstructure) generates an array of disconcerting separations between history and theory. By defining mode of production in terms of an economic base distinct from the political superstructure, and then conceptually conflating this economic base with a form of exploitation, the very social relations that make such exploitation an historical possibility are excluded as conjunctural and contingent specificities that lie outside of 'mode of production' as a theoretical construct. Thus Haldon argues that:

'the actual conditions in which coercion occurs, and which makes possible its continuation, are fundamental to the ways in which the claims to the appropriation of wealth are enforced and validated. But these can take a multiplicity of different forms

and, while they are fundamental to the process of the reproduction of the social relations of production in a specific historical context, *they are still not a part of the economic relations of appropriation*' (Haldon 1993, 79, emphasis added).²⁶

This tendency to keep history at an arm's length from theory is a striking position for these historical materialists to take, for it omits any theorisation of three crucial conditions under which any form of surplus appropriation takes place. Firstly, there is a tension between Berktay and Haldon's claim that extra-economic exploitation was a defining characteristic of the feudal mode of surplus appropriation, while dismissing the specificity of these extra-economic means – that is, whether they are tax or rent – as entirely political or superstructural. Both Derek Sayer (1987, 61) and Perry Anderson (1974, 402–403) have convincingly argued that the very 'fusion' of political and economic functions of coercion and consent that underpin surplus extraction in a pre-capitalist context makes any such separation of economic base from political superstructure problematic.

Secondly, in Haldon's and Berktay's accounts the concept of mode of production becomes detached from history, wherein the specificity of a social formation is rendered independent from the dynamics or laws of motion of any given mode of production. Haldon quite explicitly states that 'a mode of production is not a concrete social reality' (Haldon 1993, 87), that it does 'not exist in any real form' (Haldon 1993, 97) and does 'not develop' (Haldon 1993, 97). Hence processes of state formation and class conflict become entirely a question of 'social formation', leaving us with a static 'ideal-type' (Haldon 1993, 52) conception of mode of production.

Taking these two exclusions together, Haldon and Berktay's explanation for the 'variations and gradations' within a mode of production come to rest entirely on the accident of historical specificity. So thirdly, historical variation – unevenness, multiplicity – appears only as a contingent fact of social reality and something that

²⁶ Similarly: 'Whether these peasants are dependent tenants... whether they are free proprietors... is therefore not important within the context of the fundamental mode of surplus appropriation here described. Nor are the origins of their economic and juridical condition: what matters for our point is the processes through which surpluses are actually extracted by the state or by a private landlord' (Haldon 1993, 77, emphasis added).

sits outside of the explanatory purview of mode of production analysis. Theoretically, this involves a conflation of universality with homogeneity, wherein sociological differences are obscured rather than articulated. In turn, the very dimension of spatial multiplicity – the international – also becomes obscured, or overlooked, within the universal feudalism thesis. We are instead left with a pervasive commitment to ontological singularity. Thus, Berktaý argues that ‘it is permissible to investigate the Ottoman Empire in the 15th-16th centuries as *an autonomous pre-capitalist social formation, without referring it to any significant external economic dynamics*’ (Berktaý 1990, 16, emphasis added). As we shall see over the course of this chapter, such internalism is not sustainable empirically.

4.1.2 The tributary mode in the Ottoman Empire

In what follows, I seek to reframe the Ottoman mode of production debate by confronting precisely the issues of superstructure, state formation and the international overlooked by Berktaý and Haldon. In doing so, I argue that the category ‘mode of production’ should not be seen as a simple economic relation, nor merely as a form of exploitation, but a composite totality of social relations that also encapsulate the *conditions* of production – be it political, cultural or international – and the ‘laws of motion’ that arise out of those conditions. For Jairus Banaji, such a reframing is possible by expanding the conception of ‘mode of production’ to include relations between the ruling and exploited class, *and* relations between members within the ruling class (Banaji 2011, 23; Nişancioğlu 2013). On this basis, Banaji defines the tributary mode of production along two class relational axes: firstly, the vertical opposition of a ruling, tax collecting, class in a contradictory relationship with a class of peasants that were exploited for the appropriation of productive surplus; and secondly, by the horizontal differentiation between ‘landed nobility’ and ‘patrimonial authority’ within the tax collecting class, wherein the latter controlled the former as well as the means of production (Banaji 2011, 23). Hence relations of production of the tributary mode ‘involved both the control of peasant-labour by the state... and the

drive to forge a unified imperial service based on the subordination of the ruling class to the will of the ruler' (Banaji 2011, 24).

This understanding of tributary intra-ruling class relations posits a differentiation, contradiction and thus dynamism within the ruling class. In contrast to the Asiatic mode, the political is not conceived as a monolithic and unitary entity, but a site of class conflict. In contrast to the feudal mode, this intra-ruling class conflict is not seen as external to the mode of production, but an inherent part of the 'laws of motion' – the processes of social production and reproduction – of the tributary mode.

The emphases on these social relations help to identify some of the key elements of the tributary mode of production in the Ottoman Empire. The first – ruling class-peasant – division was articulated through the division of the population into the ruling *askeri* (soldier) class and ruled *reaya* (the flock) class, wherein agrarian surpluses were appropriated by the former from the latter through taxation. The most common tax was the *öşür*, or tithe, which took one-tenth of agricultural produce (İnalcık 1994a, 113), followed by the *cizye* head tax for non-Muslims (İnalcık 1994a, 66–69). In addition, the *orfi* 'sovereign prerogative' could levy customary dues on decree (İnalcık 1994a, 70). This included *avarız* taxes (İnalcık 1994a, 113), which was initially levied to meet extraordinary expenses – in particular for war making – but eventually became a regular tax on villages and towns (Shaw 1976, 120). Additionally, the Ottoman state ensured the regular levy of agrarian surpluses by establishing obligations for peasants to remain on the land (İnalcık 1994a, 145). The tripartite purpose of surplus appropriation in the Ottoman Empire was provisionism, fiscalism, and traditionalism (Genç 2000, 181–182). The first principle referred to the provisioning state institutions in cities and towns – especially Istanbul – with products for consumption. The second principle related to maximising state revenues and minimising expenditure. The third was aimed at maintaining social 'equilibrium' or rather ruling class *status quo*. Taken together these three economic principles were concerned with the reproduction of the tributary state through the extraction of surplus from agrarian production.

The preponderance of taxation as a mechanism for surplus appropriation was distinct from European lord-peasant rent exploitation because taxation was regulated by regional and central agents of the Ottoman state (Barkey 2008, 96; Keyder 1976). This meant that in comparison to Europe, peasants had greater access to their products because of the preservation of subsistence plots, as well as state-fixed limitations on taxation by intermediaries at local (*beys*) and regional (*beylerbeys*) levels (İnalcık 1994b, 115). Peasants also had inalienable rights to land (İslamoğlu-Inan 1994, 57), were better protected from market fluctuations (İslamoğlu-Inan 1994, 8), and had the option – albeit limited – to legal recourse should their conditions worsen (Bogaç 2003, 51, 71–75; İnalcık 2000, 112; İslamoğlu-Inan 1994, xiv–xv). State control and exploitation, alongside freedom to organise production, meant that peasant life was marked by a duality of freedom *and* dependence (Faroghi 2006a, 383; İnalcık 1994a, 145). Without overlooking the fact that peasants were subject to highly exploitative conditions and abuses of power, such differences suggest that existentially Ottoman subjects' experience did diverge from their European counterparts. But even if we accept Haldon and Berktaş's argument that the *form* of exploitation in both Ottoman and European cases were equivalent, it is important to note that the nature of state regulated taxation implied a very different set of intra-ruling class relations in contrast to European feudalism.

So, the second division – between landed nobility and patrimonial authority – was distinct from intra-ruling class relations in Europe because almost all land was formally owned by the Sultan, while military fiefs – *timars* – were predominantly non-hereditary, changeable and regularly rotated amongst individuals in the ruling class (Anderson 1974, 370). This created a contradictory distribution of both political power and surpluses, forming a centre-periphery socio-political structure (Mardin 1969). Located primarily in Constantinople, the Ottoman centre consisted in the Sultan, his household and the imperial council comprising the army judge (*kadi-asker*), Grand Vizier, treasurers and slave elites (*kapıkullar* or *devşirme*) (Imber 2009, 144–169; Kunt 1983, 6–8; Shaw 1976, 118–119). The latter, despite their slave status, occupied the

highest administrative and military positions in the Empire comprising a large and unified bureaucratic administration and the Janissary (*yeniceri*) military (Fodor 2009, 206–208; Imber 2009, 130). Together they provided the state with well-trained standing troops and administrative officers capable of overseeing the complexity of the Ottoman tax system (Shaw 1976, 113–114). Because the *kapıkullar* were recruited through levies (*kul*) on children from conquered territories (predominantly the Balkans) and then transferred to and assimilated into the Ottoman centre, they were entirely dependent on (and therefore loyal to) the Sultan (İnalçık 2000, 80). By the 14th century these centralised institutions acted as a crucial counter-balance to provincial power and – by the time of Mehmed II's conquest of Constantinople in 1453 – came to predominate over other sections of the empire (Birdal 2011, 122).

Although the centralised state established control over provincial notables and land, central authority was relatively dispersed. Alongside the state authority, rooted in *Kanun* (Sultanic) and *Şeriat* (Islamic) law, the principle of accommodation (*istimalet*) consolidated under the institution of *dhimmi*, allowed for local laws and customs, particularly in non-Muslim communities, to remain intact, establishing a principle of 'self-rule' in the provinces (İnalçık 2004, 564; Vryonis 1969, 277–279, 294–297). This included control over 'education, taxation, and judicial issues particular to non-Muslim communities' (Kayaoğlu 2010b, 117). Similarly, the state was able to regulate both production and exploitation by devolving power to agents of the Ottoman state in its provinces through the *timar* system (Coles 1968, 98–99).²⁷ A *timar* was the predominant form of land allocation.²⁸ These provided the basic income for its holder – usually *sipahi* cavalymen and imperial officers (*sancak beys*) – in return for performing state services (not always, but usually military). *Timar* holders were also

²⁷ How this provincial authority was institutionalised was never fixed and static, but took on a variety of forms throughout the course of the Ottoman Empire. I will return to these transformations – in particular *celali* countryside rebellions, the shift to tax-farming and the rise and fall of the *ayans* aristocratic class – in Chapter Six, but for the purposes of the next two chapters I will focus on the centrality of the *timar* system that predominated in the Ottoman Classical Age (1300–1600).

²⁸ In the classical period *timar* constituted about half of all Ottoman land (Anderson 1974, 369), with *timar* holders appropriating about half of all taxable wealth (Barkan 2004, 82). The remaining lands were divided among *miri* state lands for the use of the Sultan and his household, *mülk* private property, mainly in the form of *waqf* pious foundations, and from the fifteenth century onwards tax farms (İnalçık 2000, 109–110).

responsible for the collection of land-tax and the periodic redistribution of peasant holdings, as well as the maintenance of civil order in conjunction with state appointed judges (*kadis*) drawn from the *ulema* (Haldon 1993, 179). Some larger *timars* were assigned to more powerful and entrenched sections of the Ottoman ruling class, such as the *devşirme* and those close to the house of the Sultan (İnalcık 1976, 28). In these cases the holding was often passed to the *timar* holder's son, establishing a degree of hereditary ownership in some sections of the ruling class (Haldon 1993, 169). For example, in the early period of Ottoman expansion, a number of the old Turkish clan elite, former *ghazis*, were able to retain ancestral lands as *timar* grants, enabling them to maintain an economically dominant position. As such, the *timar* system was designed to placate through compensation the *ghazi* clan leaders and local nobles of newly conquered lands by admitting them into the ruling *askeri* class (İnalcık 1977a, 287; 289).

However, despite all this, *timar* holders were fundamentally dependent on, and constrained by, Ottoman central state functions for their social reproduction. *Timar* holdings were in the last instance, assigned by the Sultan wherein possession was granted through the acquisition of a Sultanic diploma (Imber 2009, 203–204). Scrupulously maintained land surveys and tax registers kept a strict record of the size of *timars* and their contents, in turn setting the level of taxes that could be levied by the *timar* holder from the peasantry (Barkey 2008, 96; Imber 2009, 205; Kunt 1983, 15). Moreover, the rotation of *timar* allocations were used to remove potentially discontented clan chiefs from their local environment (Imber 2009, 186). By resettling tribesmen in Ottoman Europe, the growth of provincial centres of power could be prevented whilst filling the Empire's frontiers with a powerful military force (Griswold 1983, 9–10; İnalcık 2000, 107–116). Through these mechanisms, the Ottomans were able to institutionalise the social reproduction of *timar* holders in dependence to the Sultan. As Imber puts it, 'their only source of patronage and protection was the Ottoman Sultan, whose interest they would therefore defend from local challenges' (Imber 2009, 185). Thus the *timar*, despite providing a basis of provincial power,

constituted a form of social stratification that was crucial to the reproduction of the tributary state. In this sense, the *timar* embodied the distinction in tributary ruling classes between the patrimonial authority of the Sultan and his household, and the local nobility, wherein the former controlled the latter.

The devices of ruling class reproduction under the tributary mode proved remarkably efficient and stable, so much so that it has been mistaken for the static and unchanging social form that typifies the concept of Oriental Despotism. Due to the nature of Ottoman power-sharing and the alienability of notable land, there was limited potential for unified class interests acting outside the purview of – or counter to – the interests of the Ottoman state (Barkey 1994, 58–59). Instead, discontented sections of the ruling class sought to articulate their disaffection within the confines of the extant political system (Griswold 1983, 56–57). Similarly, the state was able to maintain the internal integrity of the empire by co-opting local elites (Barkey 1994, 212) or coercively centralising power (Barkey 1994, 192). Furthermore, the relatively lenient form of surplus extraction levied from Ottoman peasants, as well as tolerance for local religions and identities, meant that rebellion in the countryside was a less marked feature of the Ottoman tributary mode than the European feudal mode (Barkey 1994, 91; 241). All in all, during the classical age, there was little impulse or necessity for reform of the tributary system from above, or significant pressure for revolution from below.²⁹ Consequently, the state, the provincial ruling classes, the peasantry, as well as more marginal groups such as merchants and pious foundations, were all geared towards the reproduction and expansion of the state and its functions. This was the defining feature of the tributary mode and its laws of motion.

Read against the Ottoman social formation, we can see how Banaji's tributary mode escapes the simple juxtaposition of state and peasant that imbues the Asiatic mode with a static conception of society. And in contrast to Haldon's universal feudal

²⁹ This is not to say that the tributary mode was not subject to class conflict, nor is it to suggest the Ottoman society was unchanging. The details of the class contradictions of the tributary mode will be returned to in Chapter Six.

mode, the relation between state and ruling class is not presented as a contingent ‘political superstructure’, appended to a self-contained economic base. Instead, intra-ruling class relations were necessary moments of the structuring and organisation of ‘the economy’ (or of the relations of production) (Banaji 2011, 24). Banaji’s conception of the tributary mode thus demonstrates that these differential relations among the exploiting classes within a mode of production help explain the modal distinctions between feudal and tributary modes: ‘it was the peculiar dominance of the state that set these [tributary] regimes apart from Western Europe’ (Banaji 2011, 20). In turn, Banaji is able to argue that historical variations between different societies *within* the same mode are to be understood not as simply contingent and superstructural variations, but as different historical configurations of the mode of production (Banaji 2011, 36). Thus, against the Asiatic mode of production or the universal conception of feudalism, Banaji’s approach emphasises the importance of delineating the temporal laws of motion, historical development and, more specifically, processes of state formation:

‘The bond between the ruler and the ruling élite within the wider circles of the ruling class was the basis on which new states were constructed and the state itself bureaucratised to create an efficient tool of administration’ (Banaji 2011, 24).

To extend Banaji’s argument, it is possible to define the tributary laws of motion as the mechanisms of control over the ruling class and means of production, that were used to extract surpluses to ensure the social reproduction and expansion of the tributary state.

4.1.3 Beyond internalism

However, in his sketch of Byzantine, Chinese, Muscovy and Mughal tributary regimes, Banaji puts aside the question of *how* and *why* these differentiated class configurations developed in the way that they did. More specifically, there are no explanatory tools in Banaji’s approach that help us explain how the tributary mode in the Ottoman Empire became manifested in the social stratification between *askeri* and

reaya on the one hand, and between central and provincial elites on the other. In other words, he offers a description of these variations rather than explanation for them, leaving unanswered how these different – uneven – configurations came into being, and how they were reproduced. In short, what is missing in Banaji's account is a theorisation of the tributary mode that is capable of delineating developmental multiplicity. As such, 'the international' as a distinct plane of causality that determines the reproduction of any given society remains outside of theoretical scope of 'mode of production' as a 'master' concept.³⁰ In contrast, the hypothesis that I would like to advance here is that the specific historical configurations of the tributary mode of production are in large part bound up not simply with an internal temporal dynamic of a society – its laws of motion – but also in their interactive relations with other societies. Put differently, I aim to show that the laws of motion of the tributary mode have an inherently uneven and combined component to them, and that this uneven and combined feature explains sociological differences between tributary societies.

As outlined above, the tributary laws of motion consisted in the reproduction of the imperial state through the appropriation of surplus derived from the centre's control of the ruling class and means of production. Such social reproduction of the tributary state took place not only through 'internal' relations of surplus appropriation but also through the 'external' means of geopolitical accumulation. By conquering land, the tributary state was able to extend and widen its control of the means of production – land – enabling it to extract greater tribute from its population. In the Ottoman case, this involved not only the appropriation of productive surpluses but also manpower in the form of slaves for the expansion of the state functions. Territorial conquest also enabled the Ottoman state to control the ruling class through the triple means of consent, coercion and competition. Firstly, subservient members

³⁰ He thus argues that 'the trajectories of the tributary regimes were driven by an internal logic' (Banaji 2011, 38). In the same vein he suggests that Trotsky's depiction of Russia as standing between 'Europe and Asia' was *descriptive* and 'left the issue of theory open' (Banaji 2011, 23; my emphasis). As the preceding chapter demonstrated, Trotsky's understanding of Russia in this manner was a *theoretical* expression of U&CD, one that took the international as a composite moment of mode of production analysis.

of the ruling class could be co-opted by being offered access to more land, thus building relations of dependence and consent between centre and province. Secondly, discontented or rebellious sections could be relocated to the frontiers of expansion and away from the imperial centre. In some cases, by incorporating pre-existing local power holders in conquered territories, troublesome members of the ruling class could be expropriated and replaced. For although Ottoman expansion was predicated on conquest, 'outsiders' would also willingly seek to become part of a ruling class in the knowledge that subordination to the state would confer privilege and security – that is, guarantee social reproduction. So thirdly, such incorporation could foster competition between different sections of the ruling-class with differing relations of dependence to, and autonomy from, the system.

Imperial geopolitical accumulation was therefore crucial to maintaining state power over sections of the ruling class. Thus, it also made tributary societies particularly sensitive to external determinations – either through conquest, assimilation, diplomacy, secession, or conflict – as a fundamental component of their social reproduction. That is, geopolitical accumulation was not just an externalisation of internal contradictions, arising from logics of reproduction 'within' societies (Allinson and Anievas 2010b, 209). Nor was it simply a process in which the tributary form was unidirectionally superimposed onto pre-existing communities (Marx 1973, 473). It was rather a mechanism through which relations with other societies would feedback upon and reconfigure the internal class composition, and thus laws of motion, of the tributary mode.

In reference to nomadic empires, but equally applicable to the tributary mode, Kees Van Der Pijl calls this relational form of social reproduction 'caging' (van der Pijl 2007, 63). On the one hand, conquered territories would assimilate tributary social relations with their own pre-existing forms (van der Pijl 2007, 63). On the other hand the tributary state would habitually absorb the local customs, laws, forms of social organisation, and individuals of conquered territories (van der Pijl 2007, 67). Such caging through geopolitical accumulation was a central part of the tributary laws of

motion and a concrete practice of combined development, in which the developmental experiences of differentiated societies were syncretically merged in an 'amalgamated state' form (Matin 2007). As Van Der Pijl puts it:

'the principles of sovereignty and bureaucratised authority of empire, heralding the territorial state, here mix with the notion of shared space reminiscent of tribal foreign relations. Different ways of life are pressed together, and the density and intensity of social interaction works to accelerate development' (van der Pijl 2007, 76).

In contrast to Banaji's explanation of historical configuration, an international perspective helps us provide a hypothesis for how different inter and intra-ruling class relations came into being: the distinctive historical configurations of the tributary mode were the outcome of relations between differentiated – that is uneven – political communities that were absorbed and mingled – that is combined – within the tributary society.

With these theoretical reflections in mind, I seek to show that U&CD therefore provides a particularly apposite framework through which we can uncover the multiplicity of determinations of distinct spatial origins implied by the international. The 'uneven' of U&CD demands we cannot approach the question of how the Ottoman Empire came into being from an ontologically singular perspective (that is, as the single legacy or morphology of a particular society or ethnic people, say Turkic, Seljuk or Byzantine). It must rather be understood as occurring within a developmentally differentiated social totality – an inter-societal world – which in turn necessitates a broader synchronic viewpoint. Therefore, a world-historical perspective that incorporates studies of Anatolian, Inner Asian, and Byzantine history is required. The 'combination' of U&CD demands we incorporate, rather than overlook, points of interaction and interrelation both between these differentiated units, and within the totality of these differentiated units, as constitutive pieces of the Ottoman puzzle. In other words, U&CD insists that we uncover how the contradictory process of conquest and adoption played a determining role in what came to be the tributary mode of production in the Ottoman Empire. In particular, I seek to show that the historically

specific class configurations that made the Ottoman Empire a tributary state were determined, in large part, by international conditions. The specific relation between patrimonial authority and landed aristocracy was not formed solely through the unfolding of an internal Ottoman dynamic, but was the product of an interactive – that is, an uneven and combined – form of development. More specifically still, I seek to show that the institutions through which these class relations were expressed – the *reaya-askeri* distinction, *timar* land allocations, and the central functions of the *devşirme* and Sultan – were all products of combined development.

4.2 Social relations of unevenness in medieval Anatolia

The study of the origins of the Ottoman Empire is an inherently ‘speculative and perilous’ (Goffman 2002, 29) exercise, limited by a ‘black hole’ (Imber 1987) of historiography; one that is deprived of reliable first hand sources, yet bursting with politically charged historiographical propagandising. Fifteenth and sixteenth century Ottoman chroniclers used the history of the Empire’s origins as a basis to critique what they saw as the degeneration of the dynasty, projecting onto the past political prescriptions for the future (Tezcan 2011, 83; Abou-El-Haj 1991, 23–25). Many of the more scrupulously compiled sources have been dated to well after the Empire’s definitive establishment, leaving reconstructions of its past frozen in snapshots of later developments. Nonetheless, by showing that many of the more speculative claims can be properly corroborated, a number of recent historical syntheses have revived the possibility of developing a coherent understanding of this period (Barkey 2008; Kafadar 1995; Lindner 1983; Lindner 2007; Lindner 2009; Lowry 2003). Drawing on this recent historiography, I argue that the origins of the Ottoman Empire were unequivocally determined by factors arising out of the societal multiplicity of Anatolia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

A brief survey of the dominant yet *uneven* accounts of Ottoman origins reveals a profound sense of the pervasiveness of the international. Written during the period of

Ottoman imperial decline, the first modern accounts of the origins of the Ottoman Empire tended to emphasise the political and institutional weaknesses of Turkic and Muslim people. In 1916, Gibbons argued that Ottoman administrative forms were appropriated from Byzantium, through the conquest and defections of Christians (Gibbons 1916). Byzantinists similarly emphasised the Ottomans' specifically European heritage. In 1920 Charles Diehl argued that:

‘those rough warriors were neither administrators nor lawyers, and they understood little of political science. Consequently they modelled many of their state institutions and much of the administrative organisation upon what they found in Byzantium.’
(Diehl 1957, 290)

The Kemalist project of state building in the 1930s inspired a very different approach. Fuat Köprülü (Köprülü 1992a; Köprülü 1992b; Köprülü 1999) sought to challenge Gibbons' thesis by rearticulating Ottoman history through the methodological (and political) straitjacket of nationalism. He therefore emphasised the morphology of the Oğuz tribe, via the Seljuks, into the Ottoman Empire by tracing a lineage of political leadership that was ethnically Turkish in essence. For Köprülü then, the social, political and institutional forms of the Ottoman Empire could be found in the Turkic traditions that had been transmitted to, or developed in, Anatolia (Köprülü 1992a). Also taking Anatolia as his spatial vantage point, Köprülü's contemporary Paul Wittek argued that it was the proselytising zeal of Muslim *ghazi* bands that was the motive force behind Ottoman expansion (Wittek 2012). The frontier raids were the foundation material of the Ottoman Empire, which from the very start was principally defined by the conquest and conversion of neighbouring Christian lands and people. The essence of the Ottoman Empire was therefore to be found in the religious-ideological identity of Islam.

Taken together these differing approaches show that ‘methodologically, the central issue in studying the rise of the Ottoman state was whether one should focus one's attention on the local conditions in Bithynia or treat the early Ottomans as part of broader Islamic and Anatolian-Turkish traditions’ (Kafadar 1995, 42). That is, our

understanding of the origins of the Ottoman Empire has been defined by the different, yet partial, spatial vantage points adopted by historians. Togan has pointed out that this might well be due to the historical condition of the Empire itself, which was based on a *multiple* heritage, traceable to Anatolian, Byzantine, Islamic, Near Eastern, Inner Asian and European roots (Togan 1991, 185). Considering the very richness of these manifold influences, it has perhaps come as no surprise that in historical explanation, Ottomanists have diverged by singling out any one of these legacies as causally dominant. It is therefore worth heeding Köprülü's warning (in many ways unfortunate due his own methodological nationalism) that:

‘The frequent attempts to explain by a single cause, that is from one aspect, any historical process which has come into existence under the influence of many different factors is nothing but the neglect of the complexity, that is, the reality of life’
(Köprülü 1992a, xxiii)

Our starting point is therefore the context in which Ottoman state formation occurred – the social unevenness of the Anatolian milieu in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This was a period in which the flow and ebb of Mongol invasions from the East had opened the region to migrations of Turkic pastoral nomads from Inner Asia. These invasions precipitated the fall of Seljuk rule, while in the West the conquest of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade eventually inspired the Byzantines to turn their imperial attention to reconsolidating their western territories. This left Anatolia – the land in the middle of this geopolitical vacuum – in a highly fragmented state of flux, comprised of a multiplicity of nomadic, semi-nomadic and sedentary communities, dynasties and statelets. There was a large Christian Byzantine sedentary population that had remained in West Asia despite the breakdown in Byzantine rule. There were nomadic and semi-nomadic Turkic tribes, most typically wedded to the traditions of the Inner Asian steppe and Ilkhanid structures of rule. There were wandering Muslim literati of the former Seljuk administration searching for employment. In addition, there were sizable traces of Christian crusaders such as Franks and Catalans, and pockets of Jewish communities.

If (allowing for anachronisms) religion, language and ethnicity are some of the key markers of political identities, then this was a truly international structure.



Figure 2. Anatolia 1300

It was in the flux of the North-western Anatolian corner of Bithynia that the Ottoman emirate emerged and expanded into an empire. As such, it was deeply imbued with the traditions of this geopolitical context, and came to draw on the heterogeneous heritages of these different influences in its period of state building. As this chapter seeks to show, the genesis of the Ottoman state, from semi-nomadic tribe into sedentary empire was defined by a series of responses to this specifically inter-societal context. I will elaborate first on this condition of unevenness by taking each of the main ‘vectors’ in turn – the nomadic migrations and invasions from Inner Asia; the breakdown of Seljuk authority; and the ebb of Byzantine rule in Anatolia. Then I will turn to how these conditions combined in the process of Ottoman state formation to produce the tributary mode of production.

4.2.1 *Nomadism and Inner Asian norms*

The Eurasian steppe of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was marked by the persistent opposition and interaction between nomadic and settled peoples. These conditions proved conducive to the establishment of vast nomadic empires, capable of waves of conquest that spread from China in the East to Byzantium in the West. In this period, Eurasian empires constituted the ‘geopolitical pivot of the ancient and medieval world and its zone of turbulence’ (Chaliand 2006, 2). The very ubiquity of nomads in this historical period and geographical region made nomadism one of the central determinations that fed into the development of tributary states in Anatolia and beyond.

The nomadic mode of production had a tripartite mechanism for the reproduction of social life. Firstly, there was the necessity of locating grazing land for animals³¹ for social reproduction (Chaliand 2006, 7–8).³² Constrained by the ‘spotty and archipelagic’ (Wolf 1982, 26) distribution of cultivable land in the steppe, migrations tended to be bi-annual between high pastures in the summer and lower steppes in the winter. This meant nomadism was imbued with a continuous and far reaching mobility (Chaliand 2006, 8). So secondly, nomadism was marked by the predatory necessity of raiding sedentary communities for foodstuffs, crafts, manufactures and luxury goods (Barfield 2003, 174; Khazanov 2003, 28). This endowed nomadic life with militaristic traits, whereby war and conquest proliferated from its necessity in the (re)productive process into the identity and psychology of its tribal members (Matin 2007, 431). Moreover, the mobility, discipline and hardiness of the nomadic mounted archer proved an irresistible military force that contributed to numerous innovations, both technical and strategic.³³ Thirdly, in their interactions with sedentary societies,

³¹ Primarily horse and sheep, and, to a lesser degree, cattle, goats and camels (Chaliand 2006, 7).

³² Sheep provided food as well as tents, clothes, and fuel. Horse was ‘at once a means of transport, an instrument of war and a currency for trade’ that could be exchanged for silk, tea and grains (Chaliand 2006, 7).

³³ Nomadic inventions such as the bit reins and stirrup were almost universally adopted. The decimal formation became common to all nomadic and many sedentarised militaries, including the Ottomans (Amitai 2010, 550; Chaliand 2006, 11).

nomads also made use of their mobility to develop extensive trade relations with widely disparate sedentary communities (Abu-Lughod 1989, 154; Hall 1991, 48), which in turn facilitated the communication and transfer of technologies and information over long distances (Di Cosmo 1999, 4).³⁴

Such a mode of production tended towards a state form that could manage these three elements – co-ordinating migrations around new pastures; leading conquering missions; and mediating among a multiplicity of nomadic and sedentary tribes. The mobility of migration meant that the nomadic relation to land was not one of ownership, and the limited nature of extensive pastoral farming meant that accumulation of surplus was restricted, especially by climactic unreliability (Di Cosmo 1999, 14–15). Therefore, nomadism was averse to the centralisation of power and resources upon which any private ownership of land and forms of sovereign authority could be based, and instead marked by horizontal and disaggregated social relationships between its members (Matin 2007, 431; Togan 1991, 187). This was complemented by an ideology of inclusivity and equality, where social relations between members of the community were articulated in terms of companionship and comradeship (Togan 1991, 192; 196). The horizontality and flexibility of nomadic tribes facilitated collaboration, in particular to collectively raid better protected sedentary communities. Because such intra-tribal or supra-tribal organisation was heavily predicated on warfare (Fletcher 1979, 237), unification tended to occur through the appointment of a supreme chief or Khan who would represent the ‘higher unity’ (Matin 2007, 431) of these horizontal structures. Hence political authority tended to be concentrated according to the personal qualities of the most skilled warrior in the position of tribal chief, who was best suited to leading the ‘joint ventures’ of migration and raiding.

With these sorts of inter-societal interactions between multiple polities at the heart of social reproduction, the nomadic mode of production begot combined

³⁴ Nomadic empire building was invariably conducted along caravan routes that facilitated the appropriation of surplus through the mechanisms of trade and tribute (Di Cosmo 1999, 24–25; Togan 1991, 190–192).

development. Because nomadism required the material products of sedentary societies, many sedentary cultures became 'a source, a component, and a model for comparison, borrowing, imitation, or rejection' (Khazanov 2003, 29). Moreover, combination worked reciprocally, wherein nomadic technologies, cultures and traditions were also imitated by sedentary societies (Khazanov 2003, 31). The qualities of mobility and war-readiness made nomads especially attuned to extorting surplus from sedentary societies through raids and under certain conditions, conquest (Lattimore 1951, 519–523). This external 'nomadic whip' necessitated the response of sedentary societies toward more ordered politics and a better equipped military organisation, which was only possible through greater accumulation and the centralisation of resources. Thus, sedentary societies required the creation of surplus, its appropriation, and so hierarchical social stratification and the concentration of political power in personified arbitrary authority (Matin 2007, 433).

At the same time, interactions with sedentary states led to the consolidation of larger and stronger administrative and military institutions among nomads, in order to better conduct wars and raids, or to control trade routes. Such expansion precipitated the emergence of centralised standing armies and the Supreme Khan's personal bodyguards, often to unprecedented scales.³⁵ Such a growth of centralised military functions was maintained primarily through the semi-regularisation of the raid, through relations of tribute and eventually direct taxation of sedentary subjects (Di Cosmo 1999, 25; Hall 1991, 43). As the importance of tribute and taxation to ruling class reproduction grew, nomadic empires tended to incorporate bureaucrats from conquered sedentary territories, in order to administer these functions of surplus extraction (Di Cosmo 1999, 26). Finally, ideology was rearticulated in order to legitimise this shift in social relations, 'from horizontal to vertical and from semi-egalitarian to hierarchical' (Di Cosmo 1999, 21). In short, the uneven relation between nomadic and sedentary societies tended toward the progressive complexification of

³⁵ Di Cosmo estimates that at its height, the Chingssid Empire had an army of 100,000, which would constitute almost every male of a fighting age. The personal bodyguard corps numbered around 10,000 (Di Cosmo 1999, 17–18).

nomadic state structures due to the confrontation and consequent amalgamation with sedentary societies (Bondarenko, Korotayev, and Kradin 2003, 11). It was through such processes of combined development that nomadism could tend towards proto-tributary modes of production – either through nomadic empire building (Mongol, Ottoman), or through the nomadic pressure on sedentary states to consolidate (Mughal, Chinese, Byzantine, Muscovy).

The central contradiction in the nomadic mode of production was therefore between the tendencies of hierarchical, stratified sedentarisation on the one hand, and the horizontal flexibility of nomadism on which empire building depended on the other. Because these contradictions were deeply imbued with determinations arising from inter-societal relations (nomadic-sedentary), they tended to be expressed first and foremost geopolitically. The ebb and flow of nomadization and sedentarisation within this milieu of intra-nomadic and nomad-sedentary relations created internecine conflicts over access to land, or over spoils of raids. This meant that ‘when one group triumphed over another, the latter would flee and push aside a third to secure for itself an area for grazing’ (Chaliand 2006, 3). Waves of nomadic empire building would therefore tend to create ‘chain reactions’ of displacement, migration and resettlement that transmitted the peoples and traditions of nomadism throughout Inner Asia to its hinterlands. Such was the reach of Inner Asian nomadic empires that their legacy could be found to the north in the Muscovy Empire, to the south in the Mughal Empire, to the West in the Safavid and Seljuk Empire, and to the East in the Yuan and Manchu dynasties.

For our purposes, it is worth noting that the nomadic heritage would be adopted and adapted by the Ottomans. This was due to a series of westward demographic shifts, brought about by three waves of Inner Asian nomadic migrations and empire building, between the tenth and thirteenth century, that drove Turkic nomads into Anatolia. The first, at the beginning of the tenth century, witnessed large scale migrations westwards that culminated in the advancement of the Seljuks across West Asia. Advancing on Khorasan, defeating the Ghaznavids, and then conquering Iran,

the Seljuks established themselves as head of the Caliph and guardians of Muslim orthodoxy. The Seljuk victory over the Byzantines in the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 firmly established the dynasty in Asia, and opened the pastures of Anatolia to waves of Turkic nomadic migrations from the east (Cahen 2001, 14; Turan 1970, 233).

The second wave of migrations, in the second half of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century, were the result of Mongol expansion and consolidation of most of Inner Asia under the reign of Chinghis Khan (Chaliand 2006, 47–48). Having subdued China by the 1230s the Mongolians turned to the steppe, through a series of conquests and sackings that stretched across the continent through the corridor of the Silk Route and its surrounding lands. In 1230, Mongol *Tümen* entered Azerbaijan, imposing 200,000 people and a million or so goats and sheep onto the region. This displaced much of its already existing population, causing a westward movement among Turkic nomadic tribes (Lindner 1983, 14). In the 1250s and again in the 1270s, the Mongols established an administrative hold over West Asia, precipitating the breakup of the Abbasid caliphate (Golden 1992, 284), the decline of the Seljuks (Turan 1970, 249), and forcing yet more Turkic refugees westwards (Lindner 1983, 15; Melville 2009, 53).

It is in the context of this second wave of migrations that the arrival of the Ottomans in Bithynia must be placed. Some historians have suggested that Osman's tribe, the embryonic grouping of raiders that would become the Ottoman Empire, arrived in Bithynia as one of the Seljuk frontier emirates (Golden 1992, 347; Köprülü 1992a, 9–10; Lindner 2007, 32–33; Lindner 2009, 118). A more convincing account is offered by Colin Heywood and Cemal Kafadar, who suggest the Noghai, a Pontic nomadic community driven to Bithynia to escape the Mongolian hordes, prefigured the rise of Osman (Heywood 2000, 109–114; Kafadar 1995, 44–45). Through relations of war and alliance with Byzantine and Bulgarian princes, the Noghai became crucial political agents in the region, developing knowledge of the new and abandoned lands on the Byzantine marches in the process (Zachariadou 1978, 262). Following Noghai's death, his followers settled in Bithynia, forming the embryonic Ottoman state. Indeed,

Heywood argues that the very name 'Osman' evolved from the Pontic term for leader of a tribe – *Ataman* (Heywood 2000, 113).

Finally, a third wave intersected with the growth of the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the fifteenth century. Under the rule of Timur, the Ilkhanid Empire poured westwards, defeating the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I in Ankara (1402) and establishing administrative control over much of Anatolia. The Ottomans were placed under Ilkhanid suzerainty, while many of the Anatolian nomadic leaders (*beys*) that had become vassals of the Ottomans switched allegiance to Timur, who restored them to their original autonomy (Lindner 2009, 109). This instantiated a temporary reform of Ottoman state practices (İnalçık 2000, 17–21), in particular raising the significance of maintaining a centralised state that could withstand the fragmentary tendencies of nomadic empires. The significance of this for the emergence of the tributary mode of production will be elaborated in the final section.

Through these three waves, the nomadic thrust from Inner Asia between the tenth and fifteenth century acted as an external whip on the Anatolian region that necessitated the transformation and reorganisation of Anatolian (geo)politics. The first wave established the Seljuks as the first Turkic-Muslim Empire in the region and broke Byzantine hegemony, effectively clearing the path for the Ottomans to enter Anatolia. The second wave caused a repopulation of the region with nomadic Turkic tribes, one of which was the House of Osman, and broke the back of Seljuk rule, opening the geopolitical space for what would become the Ottoman imperial project. The third wave briefly threatened the existence of the Ottoman Empire in what has become known as a period of imperial interregnum, compelling the Ottomans to reorder their political organisation towards a more typically tributary mode of production.

But if this exposition has largely emphasised the destructive effects of the whip – what Perry Anderson would have called the 'nomadic brake' (Anderson 1996, 217) – it must be emphasised that these developments also precipitated the transmission of the Inner Asian traditions into West Asia, firstly by Inner Asian nomads, then the

Seljuks and Mongol *Tümen*, and then later by the Ottomans (Lindner 2009, 116). More specifically, the inter-societal dialectic of nomadic-sedentary relations that was subsequently imputed onto Anatolia became the fundamental ‘law of motion’ in the region, triggering numerous developments in statecraft and empire building that characterised first the Seljuks, and then the Ottomans. The development of the Khan’s household armies, pioneered by Chenghis Khan’s *cerig* army, was directly appropriated in the Ottoman case, with the recruitment of the *yeniceri* (‘new *cerig*’) standing army (Togan 1991, 196). Many Ilkhanid practices in land regulation and tax appropriation were directly copied by the Ottomans; in the case of extraordinary taxes (*avarız*), and taxes levied in kind for military purposes (*ulufa*), the Ottomans used exactly the same terms as the Ilkhanids (Shinder 1978, 509–510). Ottoman coins were modelled on Ilkhanid predecessors, adopting the monetary unit *akçe* (Lindner 2007, 96). Like the Mongols, the Ottoman conception of law making was defined in the secular terms of the supreme ruler’s will. The secular Ottoman legal code, the *Kanun* was in many ways referential to the Mongolian equivalent, *jasagh* (Togan 1991, 195). And like the Ilkhanids, this secular code co-existed with the *Şeriat* Islamic law (Shinder 1978, 510). Finally, as noted above, the origins of the name Osman could itself be traced to the Pontic term *Ataman* (Heywood 2000, 113).

It was not just the institutional principles of nomadism that continued once the Ottomans became a more sedentary polity. The mobility of nomadism itself was a constitutive feature of the Ottoman society well up until the eighteenth century (Kasaba 2009, 66–74). Nomads themselves constituted 27 per cent of the Anatolian population as late as the 1520s (Kasaba 2009, 18). But moreover, the Ottoman practice of *sürgün* (‘obligatory transfer’) required the migration of sedentary and nomadic communities in order to settle in newly conquered territories. This could be used either to coerce rebellious tribes, or to generate consent by offering improved living standards in newly annexed lands and frontiers (Kasaba 2009, 18). In short, the very mobility of nomadism constituted a crucial plank in the mediation of relations between patrimonial authority, landed nobility and the peasantry.

The early Ottoman 'state' was therefore deeply imbued with the characteristics of the nomadic mode of production, which is central to grasping how and why it was able to successfully conduct its own imperial formation. A key 'value' of nomadic state formation in this regard, was the way in which it incorporated the 'incremental complexity' of territorial expansion, through an 'expanding range of solutions to issues of governance' (Di Cosmo 1999, 28). The peculiarity of Ottoman state building therefore lies in its distinctive solution to the growing complexity of social relations that came with its territorial expansion – that is, how these inherited nomadic tendencies were combined with, and refracted through, social relations whose origins came from spatial settings distinct from Inner Asian norms. It is therefore necessary to trace the influence of these other influences – Seljuk-Islamic and European-Christian.

4.2.2 The breakdown of the Seljuk Empire

The Seljuk state itself was built precisely through the nomadic 'laws of motion' elucidated above, involving a synthesis of sedentarised hierarchical institutions with nomadic horizontal ones. At its core was an egalitarian structure of regional rulers – *maliks* or *emirs* – each of whom had a legitimate claim to the title of Sultan or supreme sovereign (Golden 1992, 220; İnalcık 1976, 10). (Geo)political competition, both within the empire (amongst competing regional rulers) and without (primarily Mongolians and Byzantines, but also Christian crusades), necessitated the maintenance of a military structure that could withstand these centrifugal and centripetal forces. It also required a unifying political structure and ideology. The consolidation of Islam as a political and ideological force in the Seljuk Empire was a central component of this solution to the nomadic-sedentary dialectic. It was also very much a product of Seljuk 'combined development'. As the Seljuk's passed from nomadic confederation to sedentary tributary state 'new elements were added *en route* or absorbed in the new homeland' (Golden 1992, 207). As Claude Cahen argues, 'the lands they had conquered for their masters were old Muslim countries, possessing a traditional administrative

and military organisation which imposed itself on the new masters' (Cahen 1968, 35–36). The Seljuk's thus introduced a number of Perso-Islamic additions to the political and cultural traditions of West Asia in this period, by appropriating and then transferring westwards the ideological and institutional creations of Abbasid, Buyyid and Ghaznavid statecraft (Golden 1992, 220).

In these Persian political traditions and the ideology of Islam, the Seljuks found that they could legitimise both nomadic traditions of horizontalism and sedentarised forms of hierarchy (Golden 1992, 220). Firstly, the Seljuks made extensive use of *ghulam* conscription (Bosworth 2010, 51), which was most likely adopted from Sammanid and Ghaznavid Empires, and conveyed by Persian-speaking bureaucrats under the service of Seljuk princes (Amitai 2010, 544). Through this system, slaves were levied from conquered lands, converted to Islam and transferred to the Seljuk palace to form a standing army, which, at its peak, numbered 12,000 men (Turan 1970, 254). These were not dissimilar to the centralised military systems found in Inner Asian nomadic empires, and were likewise considered necessary to conduct military operations that nomadic marchers were technically unsuited to, namely siege warfare (Cahen 1968, 231). They were therefore a product of interaction with sedentarised social forms that involved 'turning foe into tutor' and adopting sedentary practices.

Secondly, the Seljuks imported from Buyyid statecraft the institution of *iqta* in order to meet the double challenge of supporting *ghulam*, and appeasing Turcoman nomadic marchers. Smaller *iqta* were granted to *ghulam* commanders (Cahen 1968, 39) and conferred the right of tax-collection in exchange for military service to the central authority (Findley 2004, 70–71). These were non-inheritable pieces of land in which all ownership and governance was deferred to the Seljuk palace (Amitai 2010, 546). Larger *iqtas* were usually assigned to the most powerful Turcoman commanders – *emirs* or *maliks* – on the frontiers of the Empire, thereby serving a triple purpose: to mobilise against external threats; to carry out increased expansion; and to mitigate against any provincial challenge by these commanders to central authority (Bosworth 2010; Turan 1970, 232). Larger *iqtas* thus functioned as semi-autonomous provincial governments,

which could, in exceptional cases, acquire a right of inheritance (Cahen 1968, 180). But generally they were associated with the exercise of office and were not inheritable; their financial and political administration was set by the state and were alienable to the state if necessary. In short they remained, as the majority of land holdings, state owned (*miri*) (Turan 1970, 254).

A third institution, *akhis* – a late development in Seljuk history but with roots in earlier Iranian *futuwwa* movements – were guilds, associations or urban confraternities, sometimes organised around heterodox Islamic mysticism and linked by solidarity and comradeship (Cahen 1968, 49). They were, on the one hand, fraternal organisations for the regulation of work, production and trade. On the other hand, they acted as groups of social activists that could at times challenge and undermine ruling aristocracies, governments and the orthodoxy of the Caliph (Cahen 1968, 199–200; Lindner 2009, 106). They could also be deployed as supplementary military forces to defend towns in the event they came under attack (Cahen 1968, 337–341). Moreover, in certain towns where no regional rulers lived, *akhis* would function as *de facto* governors, maintaining law and order, engaging in charitable exercises, and providing local infrastructure such as hospices and communal shelter (Golden 1992, 356). In this context *akhi*-dominated cities appeared as proto-city-state republics, semi-independent of any higher religious authority or sovereign. Most significantly, they became widespread throughout the towns of Anatolia, with the traveller Ibn Battuta overwhelmed by their ubiquity and importance in urban life (Lowry 2003, 71–72). These were sufficiently powerful groups that maintained social cohesion in the aftermath of Seljuk collapse, and thus formed a vital basis of political and economic power that the Ottomans would have to come to terms with during their own period of expansion.

Finally, these practices were underpinned, legitimised and codified through the cultivation of Muslim scholar-administrators. Having been recognised by the Abbasid Caliphate (Shaw 1976, 4) the Seljuks attracted numerous Muslim scholars – either typical members of the *ulema* or more heterodox dervishes – to its imperial centre. In

particular, the Seljuks were the first to give centres of Islamic scholarship – *medresses* – real importance; the scale and institutionalisation of them under the Seljuks was unprecedented (Cahen 1968, 43). Moreover, the *ulema* were able to acquire great wealth and institutionalise their power through *waqfs* – pious foundations that were primarily established to benefit a religious institution, such as a mosque, school or hospital. These were the sole exceptions to *miri* and the principal form of inalienable private property. As they became more numerous they often became attached to agrarian land, and functioned to guarantee family possessions or to extract profit from production undertaken upon them (Cahen 1968, 178). Between *waqfs* and *medresses*, the Seljuks cultivated Islamic officials – *kadis* – to administer state functions through the application of *Şeriat*. Seljuk state building also involved the provision of conquered towns with their own *kadi* (Cahen 1968, 152) who would legitimise Seljuk rule (and rulers), administer ordinary justice, occasionally perform some military and diplomatic tasks, act as judicial consultancy and supervision of trade, crafts and land titles (Ephrat 2002, 34–37; Rogers 1976, 71). With positions throughout the socioeconomic structure of the Seljuk Empire, the extensive reach of the *ulema* effectively operated as a ‘glue’ between rulers and subjects (Ephrat 2002, 32–33).

By the end of the thirteenth century the Seljuks proved incapable of sustaining the empire, very much due to the inter-societal determinations and tensions inherent within nomadic-sedentary combined state formation. The hierarchical and centralising tendencies implied in *ghulam* and *ulema* constituted a fundamental threat to the horizontal forms of circular power sharing that the Seljuk tribe’s very expansion was based on. This tended to create tensions between the Seljuk palace and provinces, which became manifest in conflicts between *emirs* over the title of Sultan (Bosworth 2010, 57–59). Struggles between centre and province could invariably be reconciled through territorial expansion, which underpinned the reproduction and legitimation of both the central administration and provincial *emirs*. However, confronted by the geopolitical pressure of Mongol expansion and the demographic burdens that came with it, the Seljuk Empire was susceptible to involution (Melville

2009, 99–100). Prone to internal divisions and unable to repel the Mongol threat, the Seljuks eventually collapsed following the fatal defeat to the Golden Horde in the battle of Köse Dağı in 1243 (Lindner 1983, 12).

Subsequently, the geopolitics of the Anatolian region became defined by the tumultuous relations between a multiplicity of statelets (*beyliks*) that emerged out of the ashes of Seljuk rule (Turan 1970, 251) – Germinyans, Karamans Mentese, Aydin, Saruhan, Karasi and Osman (Golden 1992, 354–355). The peculiarity of these dynasties was that the vertical relations implied by a centralised group of *ghulam* military-bureaucrats were underdeveloped if not completely absent (Lindner 2009, 107).³⁶ This was a product of the fact that, bordering the Byzantines, these *beyliks* were the most westerly frontier communities for the Seljuks (Köprülü 1992a, 41). In keeping with the logic of Seljuk social reproduction, these territories were populated almost entirely by nomadic marchers and their followers, sent to the periphery by the Seljuk Empire to conduct raids on Byzantine territory (Witteck 2012, 34). Thus, the collapse of Seljuk rule meant that an unfettered semi-nomadism now constituted the dominant form of socio-political reproduction in this part of Anatolia for the first time.

In addition to these *beyliks*, the collapse of Seljuk rule had left in its wake *akhis*, *kadis* and dervishes who carried the institutional and cultural memory of Seljuk statecraft. With the expansion of the Ottoman Empire in Anatolia in the fourteenth century, these institutions would become assimilated, eventually forming the administrative backbone of the proto-Ottoman state. Left unemployed by the Seljuk's collapse, *medresse* educated Islamic schoolmen and former *kadis* migrated to Ottoman territories where their clerical capabilities were required to govern sedentary polities (Lindner 2009, 110). *Akhis* remained in towns and villages throughout Anatolia, providing social and economic ties and administrative continuity between *beyliks* (Lindner 2009, 115). Dervishes would be patronised in order to consolidate and unify

³⁶ On the differences between tribal groupings left after Seljuk collapse see Golden (Golden 1992, 346–7; 354; cf. Köprülü 1992a, 41). There is some debate over how far *ghulam* practices were retained amongst the Ottomans. Although Heath Lowry suggests that the house of Osman displayed an institutional sophistication that challenges its simple characterisation of a semi-pastoral nomadic tribe, it must also be kept in mind that it wasn't until the reign of Osman's son, Orhan in the mid-1300s that there is clearly identifiable evidence of the presence of slave recruits (see Lowry 2003, 74).

ideologically diverse and heterodox communities (Golden 1992, 359). These were agents of combined development that were central to transmitting and developing Islamic legal codes and institutional features to the Ottomans. The use of Arabic codes in early *waqf* entitlements (Lowry 2003, 79), the extensive presence of *akhi* taverns, hospitals and soup kitchens in Ottoman towns, and the marriage of Osman to the daughter of a dervish (Golden 1992, 359) all point to a strong Seljuk influence in the early Ottoman state. Later, as sedentarisation became a necessity, the Ottomans would repeat the Seljuk practice of drawing on slave recruits – *kul* – from its conquered territories to furnish a standing army – Janissaries – and the state bureaucracy – *devşirme* (Shaw 1976, 27). This central administration was counterposed with *timar* land grants which would support frontier marchers and Janissaries in much the same way as Seljuk *iqtas* functioned (Shaw 1976, 23, 26). Thus, ‘seemingly, within two generations of their emergence the Ottomans had taken on many of the administrative trappings of earlier Islamic dynasties via the medium of the Seljuks’ (Lowry 2003, 86).

4.2.3 The ebb of the Byzantine Empire

The flux of the Anatolian milieu was additionally complexified by developments that affected the other remaining imperial power in the region, the Byzantine Empire. Despite very different origins, rooted in the breakdown of Roman imperial power, the Byzantines shared many similarities with the Seljuks, against whom they competed over the territories of Anatolia. Central to Byzantine social reproduction was the control over land and its taxation (Frankopan 2009, 113–114), in which the landlord-tenant relation was subsumed under a state that could exercise a high degree of control over the local aristocracy (Frankopan 2009, 113–115). As Jean-Claude Cheynet argues, imperial authorities controlled provincial magnates, denying them any real autonomy; ‘born out of service to the sovereign,’ the position and reproduction of the aristocracy ‘never ceased to be linked to him’ (Cheynet 2006, 42). The state was also responsible for setting the levels of peasant taxation, and protecting their status as

formally free of any ties to local magnates (Harvey 2003, 46–47). Due to the high degree of state preponderance, and the consequent contradictory position *vis-à-vis* the nobility, Banaji suggests that the Byzantines were typical of the tributary mode of production (Banaji 2011, 26). Consequently, imperial involution took hold as the central authority lost both its internal coherence and its control over provincial functionaries.

The impulse for this breakdown was inter-societal. A series of military defeats from the eleventh to the thirteenth century led to a reorganisation of Byzantine rule in Anatolia that precipitated its decline and eventual collapse. The combined effects of Frankish conquests, Bulgarian wars, demographic pressure from Slav, Bulgar, and Turkic migrations, Mongol invasions and Seljuk incursions meant that by the late eleventh century, the Byzantine Empire had lost substantial amounts of political authority in West Asia and Southeastern Europe (Chrysostomides 2009, 6, 9–10, 21–22, 29). In this period, state control over its rural magnates weakened to the point that provincial armies were dismantled, and internal court conflicts and civil wars became a permanent feature of imperial politics (Anderson 1996, 277). The weakening of central authority reached its apex in the Komneni era (1081–1185), when provincial magnates gained control of the state and institutionalised *pronoia* land benefices (Oikonomides 2002, 1042). These gave *pronoia* holders extensive autonomy in local provinces, with control over fiscal and military powers in return for military service to the Empire. Decentralisation became the norm, as *pronoia* was extended so that holders could appoint non-state managers in place of state officials to administer new holdings (Lindner 1983, 12). When Constantinople was captured by the Fourth Crusade in 1202, a weakened Byzantine imperial centre resorted to multiplying and expanding *pronoia* in its remaining territories until eventually many of these landholdings became hereditary (Harvey 2003, 71; Oikonomides 2002, 1056). Moreover, numerous typically feudal practices were imported into the region by Frankish crusaders, further undermining central authority (Anderson 1996, 282). With these developments, ‘free peasants were increasingly degraded into dependent tenancy, or

paroikoi,’ whose enslavement caused growing social stratification and a deterioration in their social wellbeing (Harvey 2003, 37). In West Asia, this process was especially intense. The loss of Constantinople and the relocation of the imperial capital to Nicaea precipitated the subordination of Anatolian peasants to new *pronoia* landowners that had moved into the region from the west (Harvey 2003, 77).

The Nicaean period (1204-1261) also saw the emergence of *akritai* border guards. These were semi-independent auxiliary troops that were established as part of an extensive frontier defence system designed to protect Nicaea from Turkic nomadic marchers – *akincis* or *ghazis*. *Akritai* were exempt from taxation and entitled to the full disposition of booty acquired through border raids (Lindner 1983, 11). Some were entitled to small non-hereditary *pronoia* landholdings, while all were supplemented by an annual wage, designed to maintain loyalty to the imperial centre (Oikonomides 2002, 1044). But under the reign of Michael VIII Palaeologus (1259–1282), *akritai* independence was circumscribed and they were assimilated as campaign troops. This had a negative impact on their material position in Byzantine society, often resulting in interruptions in their pay and restrictions on land entitlements (Bartusis 1997, 304). The decline in the material standing of *akritai* in Anatolia occurred largely because following the recapture of Constantinople in 1261, the Byzantine Empire’s attention turned almost exclusively to maintaining and expanding its western territories. Michael VIII reordered the social organisation of Anatolia, by neglecting *akritai* upkeep and re-garrisoning his armies in Europe (from which he would conduct further military campaigns). Breaking these military ties created a lack of security in Anatolia, leading to social decay and economic breakdown (Imber 2009, 6–7; Vryonis 1975, 47).

The recession of Byzantine rule in Anatolia left in its wake a neglected military class and a discontented local population that had become distrustful and disobedient of Byzantine tax burdens (Anderson 1996, 292; Sugar 1993, 3). It was the Byzantine Empire’s failure to protect Bithynia, and the subsequent restlessness of its Anatolian subjects, that opened numerous geopolitical possibilities for Turkic expansion into Byzantine territories (Lindner 1983, 15). Thus, as Turkic nomads overwhelmed

Byzantine landholdings through migration and predation, there was little or no resistance from local peasant populations (Anderson 1996, 292). In the context of widespread imperial collapse – both Byzantine and Seljuk – the loyalty of local populations came to be based less on imperial allegiance or ideology and more on mutual advantage (Goffman 2002, 33). The absence of any central(ising) imperial authority, culture or identity, meant that many Christian lords and *akritai* were closer to Turkic *akıncıs* than their Byzantine compatriots. Thus swathes of *akritai* switched allegiance to tribal groupings – such as the Ottomans – that offered better prospects of social and material security and gains (Bartusis 1997, 304). As the Ottoman Empire expanded westwards, Greek, Armenian, Slav, and Albanian nobility became prominent members of the early Ottoman ruling class (Vryonis 1969, 269)

The symbiosis of Christian and Turkic communities demonstrate not only the efficacy of Inner Asian norms of empire building practiced by the Ottomans in this Christian setting, but also the fact that Christians were crucial to the construction of the Ottoman state. The importance of this frontier syncretism in Ottoman state formation was personified in the figures of Köse Mihal, and Gazi Evrenos. According to one of the earliest sources on the origins of the Ottoman Empire, Mihal and Evrenos were cofounders of the early Ottoman state alongside the eponymous Osman (Lowry 2003, 64). Both of these individuals carried the title of *malik* or *emir* (King or Lord) signifying that at least in title, they were considered – in line with Inner Asian norms of power sharing – as equals with Osman, and rulers in their own right (Lowry 2003, 60). The peculiarity of the cases of Mihal and Evrenos is that, despite eventually converting to Islam, both were originally Christian. Mihal – a Byzantine frontier lord – joined with the Ottomans as part of a predatory association in the region, conducting joint raids on Byzantine settlements (Lowry 2003, 8). The story of Evrenos is all the more remarkable considering that he was most likely of Aragonese or Catalan origin, and had travelled to the Levant as part of a mercenary army conscripted to fight in the numerous civil wars that plagued Byzantium. Lowry suggests that he originally entered Karasi service before shifting allegiance to the Ottomans (Lowry 2003, 59).

Christian influence would continue in the later history of the Empire; during the Ottoman siege of Constantinople in 1453, Mehmed II received help from Serbians, Greeks, Bulgarians and Genoese. And famously, the canon that demolished Constantinople's fortifications was designed by a Hungarian who sold his services to the Ottomans (having been turned down by the Byzantines) (Kasaba 2009, 43–44).

The frontier syncretism between Turks and Christians extended beyond the mutual benefit of the raid. Diplomatic marriages also formed a crucial mechanism through which the Ottomans managed to maintain and hasten their imperial expansion into Christian territories. In 1343, Sultan Orhan married the daughter of a member of the Byzantine royal family to garner political leverage in inter-dynastic Byzantine feuds. Mehmed II's stepmother was the daughter of a Serbian prince. Suleyman the Magnificent's mother was the daughter of the Crimean Khan. Suleyman's wife, Hurrem, was originally from Ukraine (then part of Poland), and exercised considerable power in foreign policy, particularly in cultivating a long lasting peace between Ottomans and Poland during her son Selim II's reign (Kasaba 2009, 44–45).

The Ottomans also made use of pre-existing administrators and rulers in territories that had heavily resisted Ottoman expansion. Following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, two nephews of Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos – both potential heirs to his throne – were captured, linguistically and religiously assimilated, and then appointed to high positions in the Ottoman state. Mehsi Pasha became *Sancak Bey* (governor) of Gallipoli before being promoted to Grand Vizier. His brother, Murad Pasha was anointed *beylerbey* (district governor) of Rumelia (the Balkans) (Lowry 2003, 116). These weren't exceptions; a number of bureaucrats were drawn from indigenous Balkan populations through the practice of levying children from conquered Christian communities. Several of these were, moreover, members of already existing aristocracies whose lands had been conquered by the Ottomans (Lowry 2003, 117). Byzantine scribes were crucial to the development of the Ottoman state's clerical practices (Vryonis 1969, 275–276), and the majority of the

devşirme were recruited from Christian lands, forming a central plank of the Ottoman administrative and military system (Vryonis 1969, 272). Through these processes, the Ottomans were able to subsume ‘members of the Byzanto-Balkan aristocracy into the Ottoman ruling class’ (İnalcık 1954, 112–122; Lowry 2003, 115–130).

These were all agents of combined development – the swathes of former Christian warriors, princes, princesses, administrators, governors and peasants that were assimilated into the Ottoman state all brought with them their own political, economic, and cultural traditions, that were appended onto pre-existing Ottoman institutions. Local laws in conquered territories were often respected, reproduced and sometimes appropriated into the Sultanic code (Sugar 1993, 6). By leaving existing agrarian relations intact, there emerged a significant degree of institutional continuity between the *pronoia* land grants and the *timar* system that replaced it (Cahen 1968, 182–183; Imber 2009, 194; Vryonis 1969, 273). In short, the development of the Ottoman state and society was fundamentally tied to – combined with – pre-existing institutional and social features of Christian, Byzantine, and Southeast European territories.

4.3 The Ottoman ‘policy’ of combination

The preceding argument has sought to delineate three interrelated spatio-temporal vectors of uneven and combined development that coalesced in the conjuncture of fourteenth century Bithynia to create the conditions for the emergence of the Ottoman state. Having thus far identified these institutional, social, political and economic forms of other societies that were appropriated by the Ottomans, it is necessary to demonstrate why these were systematically and successfully brought together in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries under the aegis of the Ottoman state. This section elaborates on the theoretical reflections in the first section to show how combined development was a systemic feature of Ottoman expansion that explains the emergence of the tributary mode of production.

As we have seen, with the breakdown of imperial authority among the Seljuks and Byzantines, and the persistent waves of nomadic pressure from Inner Asia, fourteenth century Anatolia was characterised by multiple and overlapping forms of social relations, or 'layers of authority' (Kafadar 1995, 125). In addition to the remnants of Seljuk and Byzantine rule, nomadic raiders and semi-nomadic *beyliks* combined with towns dominated by *akhi* organisations. These communities crisscrossed with wandering dervishes, displaced peasants, merchants and former members of the *ulema*. These different social groupings, communities and individuals lived in a 'precarious symbiosis' of syncretic interaction and understanding – 'multi-ethnic, multireligious, nomadic, and sedentary, conflict-ridden and peaceful all at the same time' (Barkey 2008, 41). This was a 'world of dizzying physical mobility' (Kafadar 1995, 61) in which information, customs, laws and social relations were persistently uprooted, transmitted and re-formed. Consequently, the success of any state building was heavily dependent on how far any of these particular groups were able to manage relations with each other. The success of the Ottomans must therefore be located, in large part, in how they negotiated precisely such a 'foreign policy' with the 'outside world'. This took place in two stages (İnalcık 1954) – firstly, through the assimilation, or 'caging' of surrounding populations, through a mixture of coercion and consent; and secondly, by institutionalising the subordination of these surrounding communities, through the development of the tributary mode of production.

In the first phase of Ottoman expansion, the conquest, raiding and pillaging of sedentary communities formed the basis of imperial expansion. Many towns and cities were completely or partially destroyed in the process of conquest, allowing Ottoman raiders to appropriate significant amounts of surplus through extortion and looting (Lindner 1983, 24; Vryonis 1969, 253–266). The effects of these conquests were exacerbated by the planned and unplanned migration of Turkic nomads into newly conquered territories, adding substantial demographic pressures on sedentary communities (İnalcık 1954, 122–124; Kiel 2009, 155–156). Both migration and predation caused significant rural displacement, as pre-existing communities sought security in

well-guarded towns and cities (Lindner 1983, 26; Vryonis 1975, 56–57). But coercion was not the only mechanism through which the Ottomans expanded. Consent within the Anatolian milieu was developed on the basis of an inclusivity that was afforded by horizontal and egalitarian relations between marcher bands, typical of Inner Asian nomadic traditions. Sources from the early period of Ottoman expansion show that predation was relatively free from religious or ethnic connotations (Kafadar 1995, 86). Instead, secular and egalitarian terms such as *akıncı* and *yoldaş* (comrade) were used to mobilise Muslim, Turkic and Christian marchers (Lowry 2003, 52). It was the material benefits of alliance, rather than any ethnic, lineal or religious identity that buttressed Ottoman growth (Lindner 1983, 24; 34).

On this basis, the House of Osman proved extremely adept at mobilising waves of conquering and colonising missions throughout Anatolia and Southeast Europe. On the one hand, Osman's position as the leader of a post-Seljuk *ghazi* movement cultivated a reputation for conquest which attracted sizable numbers of neighbouring *beyliks* and Turcoman tribes to its territories (İnalcık 1976, 15).³⁷ On the other hand, former Byzantine *akritai* clans also found the prospects of equality in decision making and distribution of booty a major attraction, as evidenced by the high position attained by the aforementioned Evrenos and Mihal within the Ottoman band. Thus, the 'togetherness' of different groups was ultimately based on the common interests of social reproduction – pastoral migrations, predation of sedentary communities and existential survival (Lindner 1983, 24).

Such consent generation through material reward extended beyond semi-nomadic bonds to encapsulate relations with sedentary societies. Byzantine institutional and economic weakness meant that many local Byzantine governors decided to join the Ottoman tribe. Sensing a better guarantee of security and income, these defectors were safe in the knowledge that Osman would, in line with the policy of accommodation, grant them continued control over their land (İnalcık 1954, 115).

³⁷ Such was the importance of such methods that Osman competed with other tribes over who took credit for successful raids against Byzantine settlements such as Thrace (Kafadar 1995, 117)

By the mid-15th century, the majority of Ottoman *timar* holders were descendants of pre-Ottoman military classes or nobility, with over half of them of Christian descent (İnalçık 1954, 113). Moreover, many Christian towns were considered crucial to Ottoman security and wealth,³⁸ while others were conquered without substantial pillaging or taking slaves, ‘in order to bind the local people to them’ (Aşıkpaşazade cited in Lowry 2003, 68). Thus, local peasant populations also found that the Ottomans offered greater security and fiscal leniency, in comparison to the dwindling Byzantine authority (Kafadar 1995, 131; Lowry 2003, 57). Subsequently, many turned to the tribe of Osman for justice and support against nomadic predation from other *beyliks* (Lindner 1983, 26; Lindner 2007, 79). For example, an early source, although not short of propagandistic tones, describes how in the aftermath of the Ottoman conquest of Yar Hisar:

‘all the villagers came back and settled in their places. Their state was better than it had been in the time of the unbelievers. When word spread of the comfort enjoyed by these unbelievers, people began to come from other places as well’ (Aşıkpaşazade cited in Lowry 2003, 69).

The Ottoman practice of accommodation meant that as the boundaries of the empire expanded, large Christian peasant populations throughout the Balkans were left to their own devices (Vryonis 1969, 267–268). Many peasants were retained as auxiliary troops, for which they received tax breaks (Lowry 2003, 99). Similarly, the conquest of former Seljuk towns tended to leave *akhi* administrative structures, legal practices and economic practices intact, generating consent among Muslim urban communities (Lowry 2003, 53). So important were they in the early stages of Ottoman expansion, that Orhan’s succession from Osman was secured by creating *waqf* endowments for *akhis* and Sufi orders (Shaw 1976, 15). In such cases, the Ottomans, rather than acting benevolently, were acutely aware of the material benefits of maintaining local populations for the purposes of political security and high economic

³⁸ For example, during summer migrations, Osman would leave goods with his Christian neighbours, such as the ruler of Bilecik (Lowry 2003, 68)

productivity (Shinder 1978, 514). Undergirding the material benefits of accepting Ottoman rule was an ideology especially suited to this flux of frontier identities. Dervishes under Ottoman patronage converted people to Osman's tribe through an admixture of tribal mysticism and Islam. Osman himself cemented this important power base by marrying the daughter of a Sufi sheikh, which allowed him to cultivate relations with, and prestige among, Sufi groups and *akhi* organisations (Barkey 2008, 51–52). The Ottomans thus acted as a hinge, connecting post-Byzantine Christian lords, *akritai* and peasant populations, Turcoman tribes, post-Seljuk *beys* and *akhis*, and wandering members of the *ulema* and dervishes.

Why was it that Osman, and not any other *ghazi* leader, that emerged as this pivot of combination? For Linder, it was Osman's personal ability as a leader, in negotiating ties between social groupings as diverse as Inner Asian nomads, former Seljuk *beys*, former Byzantine *akritai* and the peasantry (Lindner 2009, 35). For İnalcık, it was the accident of geography – the proximity of the Ottomans to the Byzantine frontier (İnalcık 1977a, 267). Even bracketing these contingent factors, it is clear that the development of the Ottoman dynasty in this period was determined by its ability to negotiate a set of international determinations (the condition of unevenness in Bithynia), through allurement and accommodation of different communities (the combination of various social forms). Osman, and more broadly the Ottomans, were agents of combined development *par excellence*.

Because imperial expansion in this manner was heavily predicated on the social rewards of such combination, success bred success. Through the conquest of the Byzantine settlements of Bursa (1326) Iznik (1329) and İzmit (1331), Orhan became pre-eminent among the *beys* of the marches. The incorporation of the Karasi bands into Ottoman service provided the impulse for an extension of nomadic raids into the Balkans, prefiguring the capture of Thrace and Gallipoli. The Ottomans thus achieved a permanent foothold in Europe, opening further possibilities for expansion in the region. By 1371 Serbian, Macedonian and Byzantine princes acknowledged Ottoman

suzerainty. Simultaneously, the Ottomans consolidated in Anatolia, seizing Ankara and Konya, defeating the Karaman *beylik* in the process (İnalcık 2000, 21–24).

Such expansion led to a significant complexification of Ottoman society, as the burgeoning empire sought to maintain the unity of diverse groups under a single political unit. The Ottomans thus became subject to the contradictions of sociological amalgamation, common to the nomadic mode of production (Vryonis 1975, 52–54). As the reach of Ottoman-led raids expanded, forms of social and military organisation were required to meet the challenge of siege warfare with sedentary communities, namely a reliable and constant levy of manpower and supplies (Hall 1991, 43; İnalcık 1977a, 285). This meant moving away from the nomadic horse archer as the primary military unit, to the development of a reliable levy of troops – the Janissaries – that could engage in the protracted campaigning of siege warfare (Fodor 2009, 223). Politically and socially, this meant that the old system of independent and equal warriors that partnered in raiding became increasingly obsolete (Di Cosmo 1999, 36; İnalcık 1992, 247). Resources required for the upkeep of infantry troops necessitated the concomitant employment of bureaucrats that were, unlike nomadic marchers, well versed in administering systems of taxation, tribute and law, common to sedentary states (Bromley 1994, 40). The Ottomans made extensive use of former members of the *ulema*, who, following the collapse of the Seljuk Empire, were migrating through Anatolia in search of patronage (Lindner 1983, 8). Administrators of former Byzantine territories were also incorporated to perform these functions, so that by 1324–62, there were numerous Christians involved in the running of the Ottoman state, serving as judges, police, military officers and bureaucrats (Lowry 2003, 86–89).

As centralisation loosened bonds of power sharing between the Ottomans and *ghazi beys*, the Empire became subject to the dangers of involution associated with the nomadic-sedentary dialectic (Di Cosmo 1999, 36; Lindner 1983, 32). Ottoman expansion afforded conquering *beys* land and sources of revenue in new territories, enabling them to establish themselves as autonomous centres of power (Shaw 1976,

23). In the face of growing centralisation, *beys* sought to retain the privileges associated with horizontal and egalitarian tribal norms, claiming autonomy of rule and surplus extraction within the frontier territories (Imber 2009, 129). Briefly, in the 1370s (Kafadar 1995, 138), and again at the turn of the fifteenth century under geopolitical pressure from Timur (Hodgson 2009, 435), these centrifugal forces threatened to fragment the Ottoman polity. That the Ottomans were able to survive, and then reconsolidate and expand, was largely down to their ability to co-opt rebellious *beys* and, where necessary, coerce and subjugate them. Both methods were ultimately dependent on the emergence of a centralised administrative system and political unity that could conduct these tasks through coercion, and wealth appropriation and its redistribution (Kafadar 1995, 139). In short, combination was acting as both a compulsion and opportunity for the formation of a centralised state apparatus.

The development and crystallisation of such a state form constituted the second phase of Ottoman expansion. Under the reign of Murad I, the slave levy of Christian boys, the *devşirme*, became an institutionalised practice, reflecting the need for a central patrimonial army and administrative bureaucracy loyal to the Sultan (Barkey 2008, 76). Recruited from among men with no ties to Anatolian Turkic families, the *devşirme* was from the start an attempt to consolidate a centralised state as a counterweight to provincial forces. As Kafadar argues:

‘The sociopolitical order created by these frontier conditions developed a general reluctance to recognize an aristocracy, a freezing of inheritable distinction in specific lineages, even after settling down. A system like the *devşirme*, whereby children of non-Muslim peasant families were recruited, "Ottomanised," and then brought to the highest positions of government, could be conceivable only in a state born of those frontier conditions (Kafadar 1995, 141).

As hierarchical state structures crystallised, the Ottoman centre increasingly laid claim to land, revenue, slaves and booty appropriated from the frontiers in the process of *ghaza* conquest, for the social reproduction and protection of these new

sections of the Ottoman state (Lindner 1983, 32). Through the appointment of the first *kadi-asker*, Murad I created a centralised treasury, which established land survey registers, and organised the distribution of revenue and collections of taxes through land allocations (*mukatah*) such as the *timar* (Kafadar 1995, 146). Also under Murad I's reign, the Ottomans established a formal distinction between the *askeri* ruling class and *reaya* subject class (Kafadar 1995, 142), codifying legally and ideologically the appropriation of surplus through taxation, rather than through raids (Di Cosmo 1999, 36). Taxation was systematised by developing extensive inventories of taxable resources on *timar* lands. These formed official tax registers that set the rate of agrarian exploitation (Imber 2009, 196; İnalcık 1954, 103). Consequently, surplus appropriation that had previously been confined to localities of pre-existing *pronoia* or *iqta* was redirected to feed a burgeoning Ottoman imperial centre. Through the regulation of *timars* the Ottomans were also able to cultivate social stratification between the old *beys* of the marches and the central administration, wherein the latter established control over the former (Kafadar 1995, 142–143). The institutionalisation of the *timar* thus went hand in hand with the development of the Ottoman state, as agrarian surpluses generated by the *reaya* were siphoned off to the imperial centre. The establishment and consolidation of *timars* against an expanded state was a function of the subordination of different sections of the Ottoman community – but in particular the ruling class and means of production – under the tributary mode of production.

The reigns of Sultans following Murad I demonstrated a concerted attempt to deepen the institutionalisation of tributary rule. Under the rule of Bayezid, provincial land and population surveys, a central treasury and a bureaucracy established the absolute authority of the Sultan in the provinces. In particular, the slaves of the *kapıkullar* proliferated throughout the institutions of Ottoman power becoming the predominant holders of *timars* (İnalcık 1976, 28). In 1453, following the conquest of Constantinople, Mehmet II attained the prestige and territorial basis through which he could consolidate the institutionalisation of the tributary mode. He increased the

size and strength of the Janissaries by recruiting 5,000 new men, and provided them with improved weaponry and wage increases (Barkey 2008, 77). Meanwhile, old Turkic notables from the marches that had acquired private property in land - *waqf* and *mülk* land endowments – were dispossessed. The land was reclassified as state land and distributed as *timars* among Janissaries (Barkey 2008, 79). A similar dispossession of the *beys* took place in the Sultan's household. The higher echelons of the Ottoman state – such as the Grand Vizier and *kadi-asker* – were henceforth drawn almost exclusively from the Sultan's personal slaves instead of from the *beys* of the frontiers (İnalçık 1976, 47). *Contra* to other Muslim Empires, state law – *Kanun* – was established as a distinct body of law alongside *Şariat*, that maintained the preponderance and absolute authority of the Sultan, and allowed him to promulgate law without the intervention of the *ulema* (İnalçık 1976, 48). Finally, the practice of fratricide (wherein the new Sultan executed his siblings during the process of succession) was institutionalised, thereby limiting the potential for drawn out civil wars in which ruling-class conflict could destabilise the Ottoman centre (İnalçık 1976, 48; Kafadar 1995, 153).

The reign of Mehmet II thus witnessed the emergence of 'the idea... that an *amir* was a natural necessity in human society, that he who was strongest had the obligation to extend his sway as far as possible in order to increase the area of social order and peace' (Hodgson 2009, 562). In short, this crystallised notions of Sultanism – that the heirs of Osman were more than first among equals. They were a higher entity, standing above the differentiated communities that had gravitated around, or been conquered by, the Ottomans. Moreover, this emergent notion of Sultanism exhibited traits of the developmental combination that had created it. Thus, Mehmed II expressed his supremacy by linking himself to the khanate genealogy of Inner Asia, the heir of Islamic imperial traditions, and now also the inheritor of the Roman seat of power. By presenting himself at once as '*xan*, *gâzi* and Caesar' (Golden 1992, 365), Mehmed II's articulation of Sultanism was the living embodiment of the processes of

uneven and combined development that brought the Ottomans to imperial preponderance on a tributary basis.

4.4 Conclusion

The theoretical and historical observations provided in this chapter can help us understand why the classical Ottoman age occupies such wildly divergent interpretations of the *reaya-askeri* and centre-province relations. By emphasising the particularity of these relations, the Asiatic mode assumed that the Ottomans were inherently different, and historically disconnected, from European history and world history more generally. The universal feudal thesis posited the theoretical homogeneity of the (Western) feudal mode, and thus could only articulate societal difference – unevenness – as an accidental, contingent and untheorisable feature. We saw that such explanations, with varying degrees of emphasis, tended to reproduce the Eurocentric assumptions of ontological singularity, or epistemological exteriority.

In contrast to these positions, this chapter has argued that developmental difference, multiplicity, and thus inter-societal interactivity, are necessary to understanding how the classical Ottoman Empire came into being. Specifically, the emergence of the basic social relations of the tributary mode were determined by relations of unevenness in Anatolia, brought about by nomadic migration, the collapse of the Seljuk Empire and the ‘western turn’ of the Byzantine Empire. It was the combined development of the institutional and social remnants of these disparate communities that the Ottomans had to negotiate in their process of state formation. This occurred in two steps: firstly, through the process of incorporating multiple political communities into a loosely unified confederation; and secondly, through the political response to the contradictory complexification of social relations brought about by this incorporation. The outcome of this combined development was the social stratification between *askeri* and *reaya* on the one hand, and between members of the old and new ruling class on the other, through the creation of a standing army,

the emergence of a centralised bureaucracy, and the elevation of the Sultan as an absolute and hereditary ruler. In short, uneven and combined development in fourteenth century Anatolia gave rise to the forms and configurations of social stratification typical of the tributary mode, wherein the Ottoman state obtained control over the means of production and the ruling class.

Such a perspective therefore offers an alternative theorisation of the Ottoman Empire to the positions that have been covered in this chapter and Chapter Two. In contrast to the Asiatic mode, this chapter has shown that the Ottoman state was not a monolithic and static entity that was superimposed upon society, but a contested, contradictory and dynamic product of social relations (as I will go on to elaborate in the ensuing chapters, but Chapter Six in particular). In contrast to the universal feudal mode, this contradictory state form was not just a superstructural variant. Rather, it was crucial to the emergence and reproduction of forms of exploitation and intra ruling class relations that were definitive of, and not external to, the mode of production. Finally, in contrast to Banaji's tributary mode, the explication of U&CD presented here helps us to understand how such intra-ruling class configurations came into being. In doing so, it also helps us to understand how multilinearity within and between modes of production can be properly theorised.

Hence, and as we shall see in the next chapter, this international perspective offers an alternative to the Eurocentric conception of Europe too. By emphasising the significance of international factors in the pre-modern (and very much pre-European³⁹) context of fourteenth and fifteenth century Anatolia, the Eurocentric equation of the international with European modernity is fundamentally subverted. The theorisation of this fact, through U&CD, allows the international as an analytical vantage point to be reclaimed and redeemed from its hitherto Eurocentric pitfalls. Thus, by explicating the uneven and combined character of the tributary mode of production, as expressed through the reciprocal mechanisms of geopolitical accumulation, I have posited an alternative theoretical framework that opens new possibilities for understanding the

³⁹ In the sense that the very concept or identity of Europe or European had yet to form.

significance of the Ottoman Empire's relations with Europe, and world history more broadly.

This chapter also offers an alternative to the essentialist characterisation of the Ottoman Empire in terms of Islam, covered in Chapter Two. I have shown that early Ottoman history was only loosely attached to religion as an articulating ideology. The period of Ottoman expansion (and beyond) was instead marked by extensive collaboration with (as well as conquest of) Christian communities (Goffman 2002, 33). The very absence of a central and coherent authority, or an embedded culture, in the Anatolian milieu, meant that religious identities were heterodox, fleeting and malleable. Indeed, in line with nature of U&CD typical of the tributary mode, it was largely *after* 1517, with the conquest of Egypt, Syria, and later Baghdad, that the demography of the Empire became predominantly Muslim. With this change came new pressures of ruling class reproduction and legitimation which entailed the subsequent move away from social heterogeneity, towards a more prominent use of Muslim state practices and ideology (Barkey 2008, 102; Lowry 2003, 96, 113). This increased the influence of the *ulema*, strengthened the claims of the Sultan as head of the Caliphate, and gave rise to the emerging European perception of the Ottomans as a specifically Muslim threat. As Simon Bromley argues, the Islamic composition of the Ottoman Empire was not a fixed essence, but 'a contingent feature of the necessary intermediation in tributary forms of rule and appropriation' (Bromley 1994, 40). That this 'necessary intermediation' was, again, determined by international relations suggests that the internalist essentialism of Eurocentric approaches is historically untenable, and thus theoretically partial. But moreover, that U&CD can provide an explanation for the contingency of the Ottomans' turn to Islam further demonstrates its analytical power in comparison to culturalist approaches.

Taking these alternatives to historical materialist and culturalist explanations together, this chapter has shown that the simple juxtaposition of universal and particular is incapable of accurately capturing the complex character of the Ottoman social formation. It has shown that although the Ottoman Empire was a particular

instance of the tributary mode of production, this particularity could only be captured from the 'universal' – that is to say international – perspective offered by U&CD. The analytical procedure explicated in this chapter has also served to subvert two hallmarks of Eurocentrism – ontological internalism and epistemological exteriority. The choice of explicating the Ottoman mode of production from a Western or Eastern vantage point is a false one. That the social relations characteristic of the tributary mode of production were the product of multiple determinations – irreducible to Western or Eastern characteristics – suggests that the problematic attachment to explanations derived from an ontologically singular vantage point needs to be abandoned.

5. The Ottoman origins of capitalism: Eurocentrism and the ‘Rise of the West’

‘Modern history of Europe begins under stress of the Ottoman conquest.’ Lord Acton 1834-1902

So far, I have demonstrated that the Ottoman Empire was a far cry from the self-enclosed and static entity that it has typically been characterised as in both essentialist and historical materialist accounts. And by breaking with assumptions of ontological singularity and epistemological exteriority, we have taken the first step towards offering a non-Eurocentric theorisation of the Ottoman Empire. However, as argued in Chapter Two, redeeming the history of non-European societies through non-Eurocentric frameworks only takes us so far, for it does not provide an alternative articulation of the founding assumptions of Eurocentrism itself. That is, the prevailing problem of Eurocentric analyses in extant historiography is rooted not only in deficient theorisations of the Ottoman Empire, but in an equally problematic and one-sided view of European modernity.

We saw in Chapter Two that Eurocentrism, owing to various overdeterminations that arise from assumptions of *epistemological exteriority*, articulates and situates the developmental (and in some cases normative) distinction between tradition and modernity through a spatial separation of West and East. As such, the study of the origins of capitalism has been an exclusionary process in which the agency of non-European societies have been erased or overlooked. This is not to say that studies of the sixteenth century Ottoman Empire have been heedlessly avoided.⁴⁰ But where the

⁴⁰ Two giants of European historiography, Fernand Braudel (Braudel 1973) and Leopold von Ranke (Ranke 1843) insisted on the inclusion of the Ottomans within European history in the age of Phillip II and Charles V respectively.

Ottoman imperial apogee has been studied, it has been as an outsider, intruding on an otherwise uncontaminated European social entity (Anderson 1974, 397).

The epistemological distinction between West and East thus depends on an *ontologically singular* narrative of the emergence of modernity within the spatially coherent and hermetically sealed boundaries of Europe. This internalist story of an autonomous and endogenous ‘Rise of the West’ constitutes, in many ways, the founding myth of Eurocentrism (Matin 2013, 355; Hobson 2006b, 523). We thus find in cultural history that the flowering of the Renaissance was an intra-European phenomenon (Burckhardt 1990). Analyses of absolutism and the origins of the modern form of state are similarly conducted entirely on the terrain of Europe, with non-European cases appearing (if at all) comparatively (Anderson 1974; Mann 1986; Tilly 1975). Dominant accounts of the rise of capitalism, either as an economic form (Landes 1999), or as a social system (Brenner 1987b; Brenner 1987a), place its origins squarely in Western Europe, while non-Europe is relegated to an exploited and passive periphery (Wallerstein 1974). In this way, the assumption of ontological singularity buttresses claims that modernity was a product of Europe’s unique *historical priority and superiority*.

One might expect International Relations (IR) – ‘a discipline that claims to be... of relevance to all peoples and states’ (Jones 2006, 2) – to offer a way out of this Eurocentric cul-de-sac. However, IR too has been built largely on Eurocentric assumptions (Hobson 2012). Mattingly’s classic account of Renaissance diplomacy rests on the discoveries of the Italian city-states in their relations with each other (Mattingly 1988). Similarly, the 1648 treaty of Westphalia – the very foundational ‘myth’ of modern IR as a distinct practice and academic discipline (Teschke 2003) – is generally considered the product of intra-European dynamics (Hobson 2009; Kayaoğlu 2010a; Hobson 2007b). Where they do exist, substantive engagements with the East tend to emphasise the ‘Iron Curtain’ of ideological and cultural difference.⁴¹ The historical sociological turn in IR (HSIR) (Hobden and Hobson 2002; Hobden 1998;

⁴¹ For instance in the English School (Bull and Watson 1984; Bull 1977; Watson 1992; Wight 1977).

Lawson 2007) has not fared much better. Concerned explicitly with challenging ahistorical and unsociological conceptions of the international, HSIR has developed convincing arguments that uncover the transience, mutability and thus the historical specificity of modern IR. But HSIR too has predominantly conducted its analysis on the basis of European history (Bhambra 2010; Bhambra 2011; Hobson 2007a; Hobson 2007b).

Recent scholarship in the field of World History (Blaut 1993; Goldstone 2008; Goody 2004; Goody 2006a; Hobson 2004; Pomeranz 2000) and Postcolonial Studies (Acharya 2011; Barkawi and Laffey 2006; Bhabha 2012; Bhambra 2010; Bhambra 2011; Chakrabarty 2000; Jones 2006; Shilliam 2010; Subrahmanyam 1997) has attempted to 'ReOrient' (Frank 1998) historiography in order to both destabilise and potentially escape the Eurocentric trap. However, despite providing extensive additional empirical frameworks that have decentred the historical priority of Europe, these works have also largely overlooked the role of the Ottomans in the construction of capitalist modernity, while also eschewing any concomitant theorisation of capitalism's origins in light of these empirical findings. As we have seen in Chapter Two, Ottomanists working within the anti-Eurocentric research programme have tended to stand outside of debates concerning the origins of capitalism. Hence the gnawing separation between East and West, Europe and the Ottomans, tends to be replicated even in anti-Eurocentric accounts.

To return to, and extend my critique of postcolonialism in Chapter Two, a truly non-Eurocentric interpretation of history should seek to pose an alternative theoretical framework to Eurocentric conceptions in which to conduct historical and sociological study. That such an alternative has not yet been forthcoming has left the study of modernity at a peculiar impasse that we might term *Eurocentric realism* – the claim that owing to the historical record, there simply is no alternative to Eurocentric accounts of the origins of capitalism. Indeed, for those who subscribe to this realism, Eurocentrism is straightforwardly unproblematic (Landes 1999; Roberts 1985; Ferguson 2012).

There is, however, a clue in German Renaissance painter Hans Holbein's 1532 masterpiece, *The Ambassadors* (fig. 1), that suggests this realism requires some serious scrutiny. Illustrating a meeting between French envoys Jean de Dinteville and George de Selve in London, the painting astounds because these two aristocratic subjects are placed at the periphery, and the only explicitly religious symbol, a cross, is heavily veiled by a curtain. While these two pillars of medieval power – the church and the aristocracy – are symbolically pushed to the side, the painting's focal point – the table – is littered with objects, with commodities. Was this a prophetic, if unwitting, forecast of feudalism's imminent decline? Did it anticipate a capitalist future where social relations would come to be 'mediated by things' (Marx 1973, 157)?

Notwithstanding such speculation, the objects on Holbein's table constitute a vivid record of the geopolitical milieu that defined European⁴² international relations in the early sixteenth century.⁴³ On the bottom right hand side of the table, a book of Lutheran hymns sits by a broken lute signifying the discord in Christendom between Protestants and the Catholic Church. To the left of these items rests Martin Benhaim's terrestrial globe, made under the commission of Nuremberg merchants seeking to break the Portuguese hold on the spice trade. The globe is tilted so that after European towns, 'Affrica' and 'Brisilici R.' (Brazil) are the most legible markers, portraying the significance of the noticeable *Linea Divisionis Castellatorum et Portugallenum* ('Line of division between Spain and Portugal'). This line demarcated the division of the New World between Habsburg Spain (west of the line) and Portugal (east of the line), signifying the import of these discoveries and the subsequent competition between European states over commercially profitable territories.

⁴² Here and throughout the chapter the term 'Europe' and 'European' is deployed with the problematic implications of anachronism and intra-European divisions firmly in mind. As such it is used, unless specified, in a basic geographical sense, predominantly (but not exclusively) denoting England, France, Low Countries, Portugal, Habsburg Spain and Austria, Germanic principalities, Hungary, and Italian city-states.

⁴³ The ensuing interpretation is owed to the brilliant appraisal of *The Ambassadors* by Lisa Jardine (Jardine 1996, 425–436).



Figure 3. Hans Holbein, *The Ambassadors*, 1533

In front of the globe is Peter Apian's *A New and Well Grounded Instruction in All Merchant's Arithmetic*, an early textbook of commercial scholarship that covered profit-loss calculation, trading customs, navigation and route mapping. Placed alongside Benhaim's globe, it demonstrates the inseparability of commercial interests from maritime exploration, as well as the increasingly global – and increasingly competitive – character of trade. Above these items, on the top of the table, numerous scientific instruments highlight the rapid development of techniques in seafaring. Continuing the theme of Christendom's decline, it also indicates a mounting shift away from the divinity of religion as the predominant *episteme* toward the rationality of scientific inquiry and humanism.

Finally, linking the resting arms of the two ambassadors, and tying the objects together, is an Ottoman rug. This alerts us to the fact that in the context of the New World discoveries, primitive accumulation, religious revolt and Habsburg ascendancy, the Ottoman Empire was a persistent and prominent presence, lying behind and in many ways underpinning these manifold European developments (Jardine and Brotton 2000, 50). In this period, the Ottomans constituted the most prevalent non-Christian 'Other' that confronted Europe (Matar 1999, 3), 'persistently capturing the headlines and profoundly transforming the geopolitics of (and beyond) the Mediterranean world' (Harper 2011, 3); 'this was an Ottoman Europe almost as much as it was a Venetian or Habsburg one' (Goffman 2002, 225).

In this chapter, I propose we 'return to Holbein' via Trotsky, and attempt to recapture the significance of the Ottomans in the geopolitics of the long sixteenth century by deploying the U&CD as a theoretical framework. In particular, I seek to bring out the causal impact of the Ottoman Empire on the primary historical themes in *The Ambassadors*: the political fragmentation of feudal Europe in resistance to Habsburg attempts at Empire building; the structural shift away from the geopolitical and commercial centrality of the Mediterranean towards the Atlantic; and the primitive accumulation of capital. I argue that these developments – each crucial to the emergence of capitalism – were causally inseparable from Ottoman geopolitical pressure on Europe. I argue that U&CD can make a positive and illuminating contribution to these debates because it speaks directly to each of the two moments of Eurocentrism identified above. By positing the multilinear character of development as its 'most general law' uneven development provides a corrective to the assumption of ontological singularity that demarcates Europe as the sole historical terrain on which capitalist modernity can be studied (Rosenberg 2006, 313). By positing the inherently interactive character of this multiplicity, combined development challenges the epistemological distinction of West from East, thus cracking open the hermetically sealed boundaries of Europe to determinations arising from non-European agency.

In the first section I summarise what is arguably the most influential Marxist account of the rise of capitalism by Robert Brenner. I argue that by limiting the history of capitalism's origins to lord-peasant relations in the feudal English countryside, Brenner falls prey to Eurocentric assumptions of ontological singularity. Against this I suggest that a wider array of spatio-temporal vantage points are required in order to uncover the complexity of determinations that fed into the emergence of capitalism. I argue that the theory of U&CD not only allows, but demands such deployment of multiple spatio-temporal vantage points in historical analysis, thus prising open an expanded theoretical space in which Euro-Ottoman relations can be considered as an historical determination in capitalism's origins. In the second section I challenge the Eurocentric claim that European societies enjoyed an *historical priority* over non-European societies. In contrast I show that sixteenth century Euro-Ottoman relations were marked by material relations of uneven development in which the Ottomans held numerous political, military, economic and territorial advantages. I argue, in the third section, that these relations of unevenness entailed significant degrees of interactivity between the two. In doing so, I expose the limitations of epistemological exteriority and ontological singularity. In particular, I show that geopolitical and commercial relations of co-operation and competition between Ottomans and Europeans had an influential and ultimately determining impact on the developmental trajectory of Europe in this period. In particular I argue that the Ottoman attempts at Empire building curtailed the imperial threat of the Habsburgs, giving North-western European states the geopolitical space in which modern developments could take place. In doing so, the Ottomans unwittingly facilitated the primitive accumulation of capital and brought about a structural shift to Atlantic trade and Northwest European dominance, leading to process of developmental catch up in Europe that would give rise to capitalism.

5.1 The Spatio-Temporal Limits of Brennerism

In what has become one of the most influential theorisations of capitalism's origins (Marxist or otherwise), Robert Brenner mobilised Marx's emphasis on changing social property relations in order to construct an account of the origins of capitalism in terms of class struggles specific to feudalism (Brenner 1977; Brenner 1987b; Brenner 1987a). These struggles were bound to the specificity of social property relations based on the appropriation of surplus from the peasantry by lords through extra-economic means, where lords would habitually 'squeeze' agricultural productivity by imposing fines, extending work and extracting higher proportions of surplus. In the fifteenth century this sparked class conflicts in the English countryside, where serfs rebelled against their worsening conditions and won formal enfranchisement. The liberation of serfs from ties and obligations to the lords' demesne initiated a rise in tenant farming and led to increased market dependence as peasants were turned away from their land and forced into wage-labour as an alternative means of subsistence. Although peasant expulsions were met with significant revolt, the unity of the English state and nobility ensured victory for the landed ruling-class (Brenner 1987a, 252). This concentrated land in the private possession of landlords, who leased them to free peasants, unintentionally giving rise to 'the classical landlord-capitalist tenant-wage labour structure' (Brenner 1987b, 47).

Hence, for Brenner, the specificity of the feudal 'system of surplus extraction' determined the 'uniquely successful development of capitalism in Western Europe' (Brenner 1977, 68). Yet in spite of the extensive and informative historical explanation conducted by Brenner, the above formulation is conceptually too narrow and too simple; Brenner ultimately tries to explain too much with too little. In Brenner's schema, Marx's master concept, the 'mode of production'—conceived as the composite totality of relations encapsulating economic, legal, ideological, cultural and political spheres—is reduced to the much thinner 'social property relations' concept itself reduced to a form of exploitation. Brenner's error is to take the singular relation

of exploitation between lord and peasant as the most fundamental and axiomatic component of the mode of production, which in turn constitutes the foundational ontology and analytical ‘building block’ upon which ensuing theoretical and historical investigation is constructed.

The result of this ontological singularity is a dual tunnelling – both temporal and spatial – of our empirical field of vision and enquiry. *Temporally*, the history of capitalism’s origins is reduced to the historical manifestation of one conceptual moment – the freeing of labour – and in turn explained by it. Such tunnelling cannot account for why the extensive presence of formally free wage-labour prior to the sixteenth century (both inside and outside England) did not give rise to capitalism elsewhere (Banaji 2011; İncelik 1969; Labib 1969; Tansel 2012b). Nor can it explain subsequent social developments; by obliterating the histories of colonialism, slavery and imperialism, Brenner ‘freezes’ capitalism’s history (Blaut 1994). This substantially narrows Marx’s more robust conception of the process of so-called ‘primitive accumulation’ that Brenner and his students give so much analytical weight in explaining capitalism’s origins. In a famous passage, Marx wrote:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the expiration, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterise the dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation....The different moments of primitive accumulation can be assigned in particular to Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and England, in more or less chronological order. These moments are systematically combined together at the end of the seventeenth century in England; the combination embraces the colonies, the national debt, the modern tax system, and the system of protection (Marx 1976, 915).⁴⁴

⁴⁴ I would like to thank Alex Anievas for reminding me of the importance of this passage.

Here, we see the much more temporally and spatially expansive conception of capitalism's emergence that Marx provides. The story of capitalism's genesis was not then a national phenomenon, but, rather, an *inter-societal* one.

In contrast, Brenner *spatially* reduces capitalism's origins to processes that occurred solely in the English countryside; towns and cities are omitted, Europe-wide dynamics are analytically active only as comparative cases, and the world outside of Europe does not figure at all.⁴⁵ Similarly excluded are the numerous technological, cultural, institutional and social relational discoveries and developments originating outside of Europe that were appropriated and adopted by Europe in the course of its capitalist development (Hobson 2004, 190–219; Hobson 2011; Hsu 1997, 27). In short, Brenner neglects the determinations and conditions that arose from the social interactions *between* societies: “political community” is subordinated to “class” while classes are themselves largely conceptualised and studied within the empirical spatial limits of the political community in question’ (Matin 2012, 45). Accordingly, within this spatio-temporal tunnelling we find the various moments of Eurocentrism outlined in the introduction. Temporal tunnelling gives rise to the ontologically singular notion of historical priority; spatial tunnelling gives rise to epistemological distinctions between East and West.

But why England? Brenner's answer rests on the comparative approach typical of methodological internalism – in order to better specify the peculiarity of English development, he draws a series of contrasts between English and French development. According to Brenner, the key factors in explaining the divergent developmental paths taken by England (towards agrarian capitalism) and France (strengthening of feudalism) lay in the dynamics of the class struggle explicable by: (a) the differential levels of peasant organisation, class consciousness and internal solidarity within each society, and; (b) the differential levels of ruling class unity and their relationship to the state (Brenner 1987b, 36). In France, the monarchical state

⁴⁵ See Ellen Wood (2002a) and Charles Post (2002) for extensions of the ‘capitalism in one country’ thesis.

developed a 'class-like' character, thus emerging as a competitor to the lords for the peasants' surplus. This meant that when peasant revolts occurred the state would habitually support them against landlords, by protecting their freehold and fixing dues. The consolidation of peasant freedom precluded market forces of compulsion emerging in agrarian relations leaving France a fundamentally feudal-absolutist state. In contrast, England developed significant unity among the landed class, both vis-à-vis each other and with the state, so that when peasant revolts took place the state fell on the side of landed interests. This allowed English landlords to maintain landholdings by 'engrossing, consolidating and enclosing' peasant freeholds, leading to the development of market forces in production and emergence of symbiotic relations with tenant capitalists; in short, presaging the sustained economic development of agrarian capitalism.

Remarkably, Brenner cites a distinctly international determination – the Norman Conquests of the eleventh century – as the causal factor behind England's intra-lordly cohesion (Brenner 1987a, 255–256). But nowhere does Brenner's treatment of this 'external' determination enter into his theorisation of the development of agrarian capitalism, appearing instead as an *ad hoc* addendum to an otherwise internalist analysis. Without theorising the international, Brenner finds no trouble tracing English nobility-state relations in *sixteenth* century to an *eleventh* century cause. Spatial tunnelling in theory thus leads to temporal tunnelling of history, where historical conjunctures are explained by phenomena half a millennia apart. This leaves questions over how far this picture of intra-lordly unity stands up when tested against the history of the intervening years. What, for example, explains the fits of English intra-lordly struggle during the Hundred Years War or the War of the Roses?

In this chapter I argue that the question 'why England?' (and more broadly 'why Europe?') can only be properly addressed by situating its peculiar development within the context of the international relations of the long sixteenth century. Consequently, a theorisation of the dimension elided by Brenner – the international – is required for us to break out of the Eurocentric spatio-temporal limits of Brenner's analysis. As I

have argued in Chapter Three, U&CD provides precisely such a theorisation, by postulating that historical processes are always the outcome of a multiplicity of spatially diverse nonlinear causal chains that combine in any given conjuncture. To repeat, what this compels historians and sociologists to do methodologically is to analyse history from a multiplicity of spatio-temporal vantage points in order to uncover these causal chains. In this schema, Brenner's emphasis on the origins of capitalism would constitute one of many spatio-temporal vectors of U&CD; one that must be complemented and combined with other determinations analysed from alternative vantage points; one that is related to – among others – extra-European determinations bound in the histories of colonialism (Blaut 1993), slavery (Shilliam 2009) and global trade (Banaji 2011, 262–276). In short, U&CD stresses an 'internationalist historiography' (Banaji 2011, 253) of the origins of capitalism.

In what follows, I show that geopolitical relations between the Ottoman Empire and European states in the sixteenth century was precisely one of these vectors of U&CD that fed into the emergence of capitalism. Euro-Ottoman relations of *unevenness* denotes, firstly, the political, military, economic and territorial advantages held by the Ottoman Empire over Europe; and secondly, the unevenness in social forms of internal differentiation – of ruling and ruled class in agrarian production on the one hand, and between merchant and state on the other. These forms of unevenness entailed both an Ottoman 'whip of external necessity' and a European 'privilege of backwardness' which I argue were crucial preconditions for the eventual emergence of capitalism within Europe (Harman 2008, 141; Hobson 2011, 148). *Combination* refers to the interactive relations between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. These resulted in peculiar forms of combined development wherein European backwardness compelled the adaptation to, and adoption of, developmental advantages possessed by the Ottomans. I argue that it was these forms of combined development that were causally crucial to the emergence of capitalist social relations in Europe.

5.2 Unevenness – A Clash of Social Reproduction

As we saw in Chapter Two, Ottoman relations with the outside world have primarily been constructed through an idealised and uncritical notion of diplomatic precepts rooted in Sharia law (Anderson 1974, 378; Naff 1984, 144). Here, the supposed self-regarded superiority of the Ottomans constituted the basis of a unilateral policy toward international affairs, and a religious commitment to permanent war with Europe. This mystified conception of Euro-Ottoman relations – articulated as a continuation of the eternal clash between Christianity and Islam – was captured in the literature, philosophy and art of Early modern Europe. In the work of humanist Leonardo Dati, Sultan Mehment II was portrayed as a minion of the devil (Bisaha 2004, 162), while Martin Luther argued that the Ottomans were a punishment from God for the degeneration of Christianity (Soykut 2003a, 26). Yet alongside this widespread belligerence, there were also significant levels of European appreciation for Ottoman achievements. For example, reflecting the resistance to the Habsburg alliance, German pamphleteers downplayed the need to intervene militarily against the Ottomans, with some pointing to the Turks' efficiency as a model for German reform (Fischer-Galați 1959, 18), while the legal code established by Suleiman II was studied by a legal mission sent from England by Henry VIII (Braudel 1972, 682). In their examinations of European state forms, Machiavelli, Jean Bodin, Michel de Montaigne and Ogier De Busbeq all heralded Ottoman military discipline and administrative efficiency (Goffman 2002, 111; McCabe 2008, 63; Rodinson 2002, 37, n. 82):

‘I tremble when I think of what the future must bring when I compare the Turkish system with our own; one army must prevail and the other be destroyed, for certainly both cannot remain unscathed. On their side are the resources of a mighty empire, strength unimpaired, experience and practice in fighting, a veteran soldiery, habituation to victory, endurance of toil, unity, order, discipline, frugality, watchfulness. On our side is public poverty, private luxury, impaired strength, broken spirit, lack of endurance and training; the soldiers are insubordinate, the officers avaricious; there is contempt for discipline; licence, recklessness, drunkenness, and

debauchery are rife; and, worst of all, the enemy is accustomed to victory, and we to defeat' (de Busbecq 2001, 76–77).

This mixture of fear, awe, belligerence and admiration reflected a material relation of unevenness in which the Ottomans held numerous direct advantages over their European allies and foes (Birdal 2011, 119–120).⁴⁶ This relation of unevenness was neatly captured by Aeneas Sylvius (future Pope Pius II) who, after the fall of Constantinople, reflected on the existential threat the Ottomans posed to a disunited Christendom:

'[Christendom] is a body without a head, a republic without laws or magistrates... every state has a separate prince, and every prince has a separate interest... Who will make the English love the French? Who will unite the Genoese and the Aragonese? Who will reconcile the Germans with the Hungarians and Bohemians?... If you lead a small army against the Turks you will easily be overcome; if a large one, it will soon fall into confusion' (cited in Coles 1968, 100).

While Europe struggled with divisions, the Ottomans faced them as a unified resourceful and disciplined force (Rodinson 2002, 73),⁴⁷ one that was able to consistently expand into Europe and beyond, absorbing and converting Europeans to the 'Ottoman way.' As a contemporary, R. Carr, lamented:

'how it comes to pass, that so many of our men should continually revolt, and abjuring all Christian rites, become affectors of that impious Mahumetane sect, whilst on the other part we finde none or very few of those repaying unto us' (cited in Matar 1999, 9).

The unevenness between the Ottomans and Europe was underpinned by the divergence in forms of social reproduction associated with the tributary and feudal mode of production respectively. This was expressed in three ways. The first was in the relations that pertained among social classes based on predominantly agrarian

⁴⁶ Perry Anderson goes as far as to suggest that under Suleiman I's reign the Ottomans were 'the most powerful Empire in the world. Overshadowing his nearest European rival, Suleiman enjoyed a revenue twice that of Charles V' (Anderson 1974, 365).

⁴⁷ For further elucidations of this unevenness see (Artemel 2003, 161–163; Bisaha 2004, 162; Faroqi 2006b, 101; Fischer-Galați 1959, 18; Murphey 2002, 6).

production: between exploiter and exploited (and therefore also in the forms and character of surplus appropriation by the ruling class in these respective societies); secondly, in the contradictory relations between different sections of the ruling class; thirdly, in relationship between merchants and states that these respective forms of social reproduction gave rise to. These forms of unevenness will be considered in turn.

As we have seen Ottoman society was characterised by a tributary mode of production, defined firstly, by the vertical opposition of a ruling, tax collecting, class in a contradictory relationship with a class of peasants that were exploited for the appropriation of productive surplus; and secondly, by the horizontal differentiation between 'landed nobility' and 'patrimonial authority' within the tax collecting class, wherein the latter controlled the former, as well as the means of production. The primary contradiction of the tributary mode thus lay in the structure of the ruling class, which could potentially come into conflict over the distribution of surplus between its central and provincial sections. The prevention of this conflict, and hence the continued reproduction of the tributary mode, was possible so long as the Ottoman ruling class could maintain its material wellbeing and ideological unity (Haldon 1993, 173).

Haldon suggests that such unity was achievable only through a policy of military and economic expansion (Haldon 1993, 173). Provincial notables and would-be members of the Ottoman ruling could best guarantee expanded access to surplus only through the accumulation of more land that would in turn be redistributed to them in the form of *timars*. Similarly, the burgeoning central state required greater access to taxes, tributes and a population from which to recruit slave elites. Both objectives were possible only through continued territorial accumulation. Consequently, the reproduction of the tributary rule was fundamentally dependent on agrarian production in support of geopolitical accumulation and vice versa – what Tansel aptly calls the Ottoman 'military-agricultural complex' (Tansel 2012a, 13). Provincially, this involved the maintenance of *sipahi* cavalry troops who reproduced themselves and

their retainers by appropriating peasant surpluses on their *timar* land allocations. In return, they provided arms, horses, food and other supplies for themselves and their retainers in military campaigns (Shaw 1976, 126). Centrally, through the institution of *devşirme* the Ottoman centre was able to fill its ranks with the most able boys in the Empire, training them into a well drilled military force, the Janissaries. This section of the military was supported by the extensive accumulation of agrarian surplus, redistributed to them through the treasury in the form of wages. Janissary pay constituted the single largest item of treasury expenditure, costing 44% of the treasury's budget in 1527 (at its peak in 1630 this would rise to 77%) (Murphey 2002, 43–44).

Through these mechanisms of social reproduction, the Ottomans were able to raise seasoned, disciplined and steadfast armies on an unprecedented scale. The *kapıkullar* army – which included the Janissaries, as well as a cavalry and artillery – comprised the best trained and most loyal section of the Ottoman army, numbering an estimated 30,000 by the reign of Suleiman I (Shaw 1976, 123). In the provinces the *timar* system could raise up to 80,000 men between the *sipahis* and their retainers. These were supplemented by auxiliary troops and *akıncıs* drawn from peasant and nomadic populations within the Empire (Shaw 1976, 127). For example, relations of tribute with the Tatar Khan of Crimea could supply up to an estimated 100,000 additional *akıncıs* to the Ottoman army (Aksan 2005, 151–152). Similarly, North African corsairs under Ottoman vassalage provided a large and skilled naval force in the Mediterranean (Aksan 2005, 154). Taken together, in the sixteenth century the Sultan could potentially deploy approximately 200,000 men without putting the Ottoman treasury or peasantry under any exceptional strain (Murphey 2002, 36).⁴⁸

The Ottomans' ability to raise vast and loyal armies for military campaigns was matched by the development of 'centralised modes for resource extraction and allocation for use in war' (Murphey 2002, 98) that provided the administrative basis of

⁴⁸ However, such a number was never fully deployed. Many were held in reserve (Murphey 2002, 37), and many were required to stay at home in order to perform policing and security functions in Ottoman towns, villages and fortresses (Shaw 1976, 117, 123).

military support. The state's regulation of production through records of land tenure enabled them to encourage grain production that would feed this vast army, as well as raise oxen and buffalo in Rumelia and horses from the Danube for transporting supplies (Shaw 1976, 130). Routinized levying of military provisions in the form of *avarız* taxes was an established procedure by the sixteenth century (Murphey 2002, 99). Armies would be supplied with basic foodstuffs from the state treasury or locally from state owned lands, rather than resorting to forced contributions from peasant populations (Murphey 2002, 86). By integrating agrarian production with war making in this way, agrarian and civilian life was largely left undisturbed, imbuing the military-agricultural complex with a continuous stability unmatched in feudal Europe (Murphey 2002, 86). In the fields of transport, logistics and food supply, the unity of the tributary mode made the Ottomans 'trend-setters and models of perfection whom the others strove to emulate' (Murphey 2002, 99).

The unity and stability of the Ottoman Empire contrasted significantly with European forms of social reproduction. These too were predominantly based on agrarian production, where peasants had direct access to the means of production and also therefore subsistence (Anderson 1996, 147). And like the Ottoman Empire, this condition meant that an aristocratic ruling class required political, ideological and military means in order to exploit this peasantry and extract a surplus for the purpose of lordly consumption (Anderson 1996, 147). However, unlike the Ottoman Empire these means were not controlled by, or concentrated in, a centralised and unified state, but were dispersed across the nobility (Anderson 1996, 148). Consequently, peasants were more susceptible to coercive squeezes on their productivity, and had no recourse to outside legal protection from their lords. This regularly led to declining living conditions and in turn, rural rebellions (Brenner 1987b, 36). At the same time, the dispersion of coercive capabilities meant that political authority in Europe was fragmented, parcellised and therefore also highly competitive, with heightened intra-lordly struggle taking place over territory both within and outside of feudal 'states'

(Teschke 2003, 43–44). In short, both war and rebellion was more pronounced within Europe than it was within Ottoman territories.

Because of the fragmented and parcellised character of political power, Europeans that wanted to make war required extraordinary financing outside of day to day ruling class reproduction. In order to raise armies, European rulers borrowed from international banking houses (Mielants 2008, 70) or asked wealthy and powerful sections of society for contributions, either in terms of military support or taxes (McNeill 1984, 63–143; Tilly 1975, 73–74). This was often conducted via ‘local estates and assemblies or city-leagues in which the merchant-entrepreneurial class wielded significant – even military – power’ (Mielants 2008, 70). Hence a by-product of European feudal war-making was an attendant rise in the political autonomy, power and influence of merchants, with increasing degrees of representation in the decision making structures of states (Chiot 1985; Mielants 2008, 79).

In contrast, the Ottoman Empire had little requirement for monetary financing outside of the customary levies already imposed on agrarian production. Consequently, there was scarce potential for autonomous merchant activity outside of the functional requirements of the tributary state. The relations between merchants and the Ottoman ruling class were balanced considerably in favour of the latter, who exercised significant control over merchant activity either directly (Çizakça 1980, 145), or through the guild system (İnalcık 1969, 104). Conflicts or tensions between merchants and guilds tended to curtail merchant autonomy and power (İnalcık 1969, 106). Accumulation of wealth was discouraged and restricted by controlling coin circulation, production and prices, and anti-luxury laws were deployed to confiscate merchant fortunes (Faroqhi 2006b, 157; Göçek 1996, 92; İnalcık 1969, 107). Interregional trade was heavily regulated, in which provisions for towns came almost entirely from their own hinterlands thus narrowing the geographical remit of production and distribution to local regions (İslamoğlu-Inan 1994, 204). Caravan endpoints geographically coincided with seats of government authority,

ensuring close supervision of prices and commodities traded. Tax on trade enabled state extraction of surpluses from mercantile activity (Keyder 1976, 184).

The tension between the state and merchants was also present geopolitically. For a ruling class fundamentally dependent on agriculture and tribute for their reproduction, the capture of trade routes was considered functional to tributary power, to bring those outside of it imperial purview within its tributary regime (Hess 1970, 1916; Hess 1973, 75).⁴⁹ So while the state could at times show signs of ‘economic intentionality’ (Brummett 1994, 7; Casale 2006) merchants were not considered important enough for state protection or support – agriculture remained the priority. Following the capture of the Mamluk Empire in 1517, the Ottomans were placed in a position of direct competition with the Portuguese over access to the spice trade in the Indian Ocean, and gold and slaves in Africa (Alexander 2009, 225–227). But although Ottoman naval commander Selman Reis believed that the Portuguese could have been driven out of the India Ocean (Salih 1993, 215), imperial policy reverted to territorial expansion into the agriculturally more fertile and populous territories of Southeast Europe. That the Ottomans did not pursue the Indian course was primarily due to the reproductive requirements of a ruling class based on agrarian production (Casale 2007, 291; Hess 1973, 69), reflecting the swelling claims made by provincial notables on access to booty, land, and thus power as such (Faroghi 2006b, 12).

In contrast, European powers were explicitly and intimately focussed on bringing under direct conquest and political control commercially valuable territories for specifically commercial purposes. The reason was due to the relative backwardness of European feudal reproduction, which was dependent on the wealth drawn from merchants and financiers to either fund (geo)political accumulation (in the case of Habsburg Spain and Austria), or for the direct reproduction of the ruling class itself (in the case of city-states such as Genoa and Venice). Consequently, the state was sensitive to, or at the behest of, merchant interests, wherein state resources,

⁴⁹ Rhoads Murphey notes that many representatives of key crafts and trades were required to accompany the military on campaigns to establish ‘army market places’ that would further assist with the provisioning of the army (Murphey 2002, 91).

especially military, were deployed in order to obtain commercial advantages (Curtin 1984, 116, 128). And such was the extent and autonomy of merchant power that no European Emperor could have withdrawn or demanded the return of ships in the Indian Ocean as the Ottomans had done (Mielants 2008, 81).

These uneven internal relations – between ruling and ruled classes in agrarian production on the one hand, and between state and merchant on the other – can therefore be demonstrated as a determinant of an international relation of Euro-Ottoman unevenness – the relative backwardness of the European ruling classes, and the comparative weakness in its form of social reproduction when compared to the Ottoman Empire. These European ‘privileges of backwardness’ encouraged and compelled its people – both ruling and ruled classes – to develop and adopt new ways of securing their social reproduction. At the same time, the relative strength of the Ottoman social form entailed a ‘disadvantage of progressiveness’, wherein the stability of social reproduction provided no immanent impulse for change or development. This relation of unevenness goes some way to explaining why the so-called ‘miracle’ of capitalism would occur in Europe, and why it would not be repeated in Ottoman territories. That this divergence was a product of Ottoman progressiveness and European backwardness suggests that Eurocentric assumptions of historical priority need to be reconsidered. Moreover, these two elements – Ottoman strength/ European privilege of backwardness – were ultimately *interrelated and co-constitutive phenomena*. As a consequence of its comparative strength, the geopolitical pressure of Ottomans constantly affected and redirected European development (Hobson 2006a, 591–592), in turn compelling changes in its forms of social reproduction.⁵⁰ This meant that while the Ottomans were faced as a significant existential threat, they were also an opportunity for the most backward part of Europe – the Northwest – to outflank and outstrip the more advanced Habsburg Empire and Italian city-states.

⁵⁰ What Trotsky would have called a ‘whip of external necessity.’

5.3 Combination – *Pax Ottomana* and European Trade

Coupled with the unevenness in forms of social reproduction, the Euro-Ottoman relation entailed a curious form of combined development. The development of European culture over the course of the Renaissance cannot be separated from such interrelations. In certain cases, such as Gentile Bellini and Constanzo da Ferrara, European artists spent time in the Ottoman court and worked under the Sultan's commission (Jardine and Brotton 2000, 42). Ottoman imagery was widely used by Italian Renaissance painters seeking to elicit support for crusades by featuring the Ottomans as the embodiment of the Islamic threat (Soykut 2003b, 74). Humanist literature would similarly deploy the Ottomans as a comparative allegorical vehicle through which medieval forms of European statecraft could be analysed and criticised (Artemel 2003, 157). In both Shakespeare's *Othello* and Thomas More's *Dialogue*, Ottoman military supremacy revealed the underlying divisions in Christendom (Artemel 2003, 163).

These comparisons with the Ottoman Empire therefore reflected a period of European self-examination and criticism in the context of Christendom's breakdown as a unifying principle (Yapp 1992, 148-149). The view of the Ottoman Empire as the monolithic embodiment of Islam became the mirror against which Catholics and Protestants could define themselves, and contributed to the cultivation of a European identity (Kasaba 2009, 48). It was in the very context of the Ottoman threat that propagandists, politicians and thinkers began talking about Europe as a normative as well as a geographical concept. The aforementioned Aeneas Sylvius coined the very adjective 'European' following the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans (Yapp 1992, 141), and Habsburg and Polish publicists began appealing to secular European values in order to defend Hungarian territories from Ottoman incursions (Coles 1968, 148).

In terms of diplomacy, culture and religion, the Ottoman presence was inseparable from the breakdown of the old and the emergence of increasingly modern ways of thinking. Considering the extensive ideological effect of Euro-Ottoman

relations, one might wonder why the historiography of capitalism's material origins has been constructed with the Ottomans absent. For the remainder of the chapter, I will explore this as an additional and underappreciated trajectory of combined development between the Ottomans and Europe in the sixteenth century, and argue that this constituted a fundamental and necessary (but not sufficient) condition for the emergence of capitalism in Western Europe.

5.3.1 An Ottoman 'whip of external necessity'

Prior to the definitive establishment of the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth century, Europe existed in an interdependent commercial relationship with the rest of the world in which it was relatively isolated from, and peripheral to, global trade (Casale 2009, 6). European traders of this period greatly benefited from pre-existing networks, relations and cultures of exchange (Abu-Lughod 1989, 355–361), as well as the exposure to extensive sources of technology and knowledge (Hsu 1997, 27; Hobson 2004). Due to this condition of backwardness, the recovery of European feudalism, the flourishing of commerce and the cultural Renaissance that accompanied it were directly connected to the reestablishment of peaceful lines of communication and trade between East and West that followed the expansion and consolidation of the Ottoman Empire (Barendse 2000, 192; Fleet 1999, 123).

Through the institutional support of the Ottoman state, *Pax Ottomana* lowered commercial protection and transaction costs, established relatively uniform trading practices, and hastened the alacrity of trade. On land and sea Ottoman rule was crucial to safeguarding traders from banditry or piracy, while building caravanserais, wells and garrisons that would facilitate interregional trade (İnalçık 1969, 97 fn. 2; Mather 2009, 26; Owen 1981, 3; Steensgaard 1974, 62). Agrarian production benefitted from rural security, state control of peasant flight, the repair of irrigation, and the development of a more regular and efficient tax system (Owen 1981, 3). Cities such as Dubrovnik, Constantinople, Izmir and Aleppo mediated between old east-west trade routes, becoming commercial centres where European, Arab, Persian, Armenian,

Greek, Jewish and Indian merchants intermingled (Kasaba 2009, 46). In these ways, the emergence of a *Pax Ottomana* brought together highways of commerce linking Russia and Central Asia with Europe via the Black Sea, and the Levant and North Africa to the Indian Ocean where the bulk of Euro-Asian trade was conducted (Karsh 2007, 93; Pamuk 2000, 23); geographically and economically, 'the Ottoman Empire was the hinge that connected the rapidly growing economies of Europe with those of the East' (Gallant 2006, 126).

The safe passages into the Indian Ocean and along the Silk Route were crucial to the transmission of commodities that gave rise to the European demand for Eastern goods, which aided the further development of commerce in Europe (Pamuk 2000, 11, 18; Rossabi 1997, 55–63). Hence, 'engines of the economic boom of the late fifteenth century such as Venice, Marseilles, and Ragusa depended on the Ottoman Empire' for both luxury and bulk goods (Barendse 2000, 190), and in the course of the sixteenth century less established states such as France, England and the Low Countries became increasingly reliant on Ottoman raw materials (McGowan 1981, 3–5). The spice trade that would become a cornerstone of colonial capitalism was primarily conducted between the Indian Ocean and the Middle East, with European markets initially only receiving surpluses leftover from Middle Eastern consumption; by the late 1500s, 80 per cent of the pepper trade was being conducted through the Levant (Barendse 2000, 194; Scammell 1981, 140). Supplies of Iranian silk were transmitted to the West via Aleppo, significant amounts of wheat came from the Crimea and Greece, rice from Egypt, cattle from Hungary, Wallachia, Moldova, and timber, wool, mohair, cotton and hides from the Balkans and Anatolia (McGowan 1981, 3).

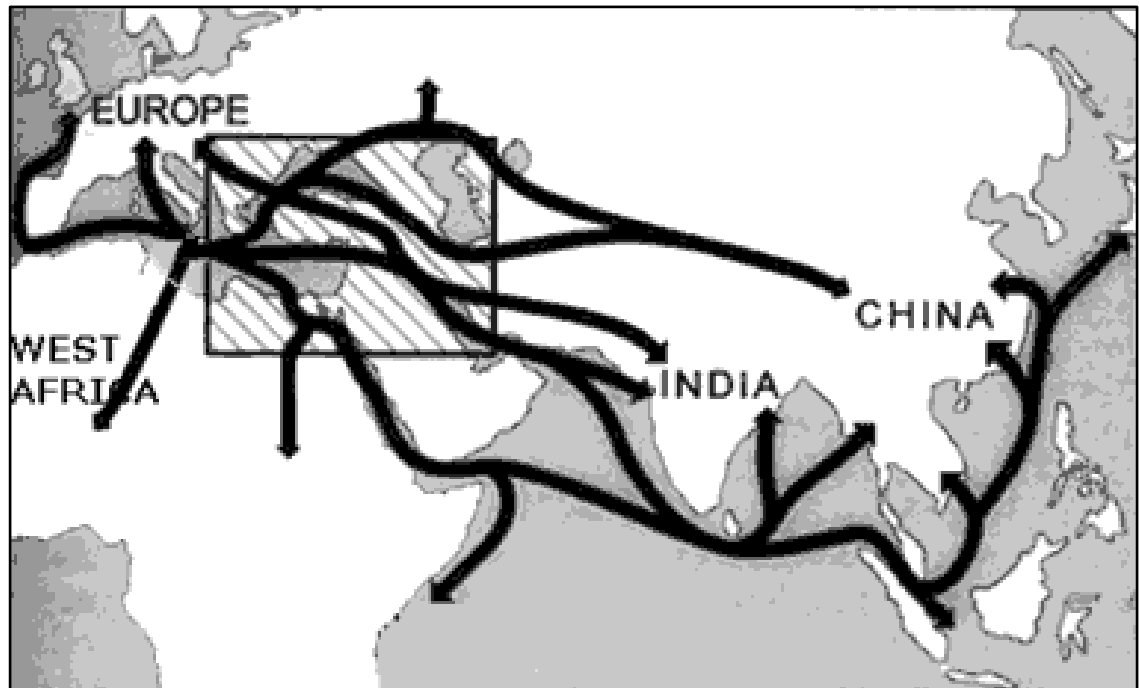


Figure 4. Eurasian trade routes during Pax Ottomana

Trade and communication between the Ottomans and Europe also assisted the transmission of social and technological knowledge, leading to a spurt of development in European manufacturing, particularly those sectors imitating eastern products (Goody 2006b, 144). The boost in French economic activity following a trade agreement with the Ottomans led to the proto-industrialisation of towns such as Marseille (Jensen 1985, 464). The competition in silk markets between the Levant and Venice inspired the creation of the hydraulic mill in Bologna which would later be adapted to construct Lombe's Mill in Derby in the early eighteenth century (Çizakça 1987, 253–254; Goody 2006b, 143) – arguably the world's first fully mechanised factory (G. Darling 2003, 104). Because Ottoman merchants themselves were active agents in bolstering trade within the Empire and beyond, their own credit system and methods of accumulation such as the *simsar* monopoly association and *mudaraba* (Goody 2006b, 143; İnalcık 1969, 100–101) advance system became woven into the fabric of European commercial relations, prefiguring the 'complete control of a commodity from production to sale' (Scammell 1981, 205) that would become the hallmark of company capitalism.

However, despite the regenerative effects of *Pax Ottomana*, for most of Europe the Ottoman incursions seemed like a semi-apocalyptic event. With a standing army the size of which no alliance of European princes could match (Anderson 1974, 377), the Ottomans constituted a formidable military danger that threatened the very existence of Christendom. The permanence of Ottoman geopolitical competition with European states meant that '[u]p to 1596 there was no question of international politics which did not somehow involve the Ottomans' (İnalcık 2000, 35). In 1453 the Ottomans conquered Constantinople, subsequently using it as a base to conduct further excursions into Greece, Bosnia, Serbia, Morea and Albania. Genoese colonies in the Crimea were taken in 1475, and Syria and Egypt were conquered in 1517. By 1519, concern for the 'Terrible Turk' loomed so large that the election of Charles V as the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire was in part based on his ability to unite Christendom in wars against the Ottomans (İnalcık 2000, 35). Europe's Eastern preoccupation was soon justified as Ottoman armies surged onward to Budapest and Vienna in the 1520s, putting them in direct conflict with the Habsburgs. The ensuing wars between these two 'superpowers' were conducted primarily on the Southeastern terrain of Europe, with an especially long drawn out war over Hungary and the Mediterranean.

Aside from these 'direct' instances of geopolitical pressure, the Ottomans made extensive use of alliances and connections with dissident groups in Europe as a means of undermining Habsburg hegemony (Agoston 2007). Francis I, King of Valois France, recognised the significance of the Ottoman Empire as a 'power-balancer', candidly admitting:

'I keenly desire the Turk powerful and ready for war, not for himself, because he is an infidel and we are Christians, but to undermine the emperor's power to force heavy expenses upon him and to reassure all other governments against so powerful an enemy' (cited in Elliot 1993, 155).

Around the same time, Sultan Suleyman I established links with the Schmalkalden League of German Protestant princes, urging them to co-operate with

France against the Habsburgs, and offering them amnesty should Ottoman armies conquer Europe (İnalçık 2000, 37). The military pressure of the Ottoman Empire was a crucial contributing factor in the origins and expansion of the Reformation. Lutheran revolts swept through Germany during a period in which the Habsburgs were especially dependent on German military support and financial aid in wars against the Ottomans (Fischer-Galați 1959, 24). This only proved forthcoming on the condition that Charles V agreed to religious reforms. In this context, Lutherans sought to carve out greater religious freedom whenever conflict between Ottomans and Habsburgs surfaced, using the Ottoman threat as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Charles V (Fischer-Galați 1959; Nexon 2009, 169). The ensuing spread of the Reformation often occurred in territories that bore the mark of the Ottomans, most notably in Hungary. The Ottomans encouraged religious heterodoxy in Hungarian lands as a check on Roman Catholic (and by extension Habsburg) claims to power and authority in the region (Kortepeter 1973, 124–130, 188–189). They went as far as providing military support to the Hungarian Protestant revolt against Habsburg-Catholic rule (1604), and awarded its leader Stephan Bocskay an *ahitname* (treaty), which confirmed him Prince of Transylvania and King of Hungary (Kortepeter 1973, 199).

The ‘*Calvino-turcismus*’ would reach as far as the French Calvinist party, who implored the use of an Ottoman alliance against Spain in the second half of the sixteenth century (İnalçık 2000, 37). With less success, the Ottomans also attempted to develop links with the Moriscoes in Spain (Hess 1978, 94) and Protestants in the Low Countries (Nexon 2009, 192) in order to internally destabilise Habsburg Spain. William of Orange sent ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire in 1566 to assist with the Dutch Revolt, stating, ‘the Turks are very threatening, which will mean, we believe, that the king will not come to the Netherlands this year’ (Letter of William of Orange to his brother, circa 1565, cited in Schmidt 2001, 103–104). Aside from material assistance, the image of the Turk was crucial in the ideological mobilisation of anti-Papal sentiment. In 1521, Luther wrote ‘how shamefully the pope has this long time baited us with the war against the Turks, gotten our money, destroyed so many Christians

and made so much mischief!' (Martin Luther cited in Kasaba 2009, 49). Later, in the 1570s Dutch rebels were known to use the slogan '*Liever Turks dan Paaps*'⁵¹ (Schmidt 2001, 103–104).

Both Charles V's and Phillip II's preoccupation with the Ottoman front came at an extremely high cost. The former could not maintain either religious or Austro-Castilian unity, and the latter oversaw the eventual breakaway of the Dutch Provinces that would mark the beginning of the end for the Spanish Habsburg epoch. Hence, it was only after the Ottoman threat was dispelled from the Mediterranean that Phillip II could concentrate Spanish efforts in consolidating rule in the Netherlands and invading England in the late sixteenth century, by which time it was arguably all too late (Nexon 2009, 189). Various authors have noted that it was an accumulation of such 'cross-pressures generated by the heterogeneity and scale' (Nexon 2009, 137) of the Habsburg domain that hindered attempts at the establishment of a unified imperial hegemony in Europe (Chiot 1985, 183; Fischer-Galați 1959, 113–115; Kennedy 1989, 31–70; Wallerstein 1974, 167; Watson 1992, 180, 188). In numerous ways it was the Ottoman threat that so persistently redirected Habsburg resources away from the internal divisions that were stretching the Empire to the Northwest, contributing in turn to the perpetuation of 'multiple polities within the cultural unity of Christian Europe' that 'time and again frustrated universal imperial ambitions' (Teschke 2003, 104).

It could be said then, that the interactive relations between the Ottomans and Europe intensified uneven and combined development throughout Europe. Consequently, 'combination' was itself felt *unevenly*, with its specific causal effects varying across different European states. The more 'advanced' European states constituted the primary focus of Ottoman military operations, while alliances with more 'backward' European states were utilised to balance against the Habsburgs. As such, while the Habsburgs, Genoese, Venetians, Spanish and Portuguese were antagonistically engaged with the Ottomans, North-western European states such as

⁵¹ 'Rather Turkish than a papist.'

France, the Low Countries and particularly England were afforded the geopolitical space required to conduct modern state-building. This 'privilege of backwardness' became manifest along two causal vectors of combination – firstly, by bringing about a structural shift away from the dominance of the Mediterranean to the Atlantic; secondly, by isolating England from Habsburg geopolitical pressure. These will be discussed in turn.

5.3.2 The Ottoman blockade and the emergence of the Atlantic

In accordance with Ottoman geopolitical interests and aims, the commercial effects of *Pax Ottomana* were felt unevenly across Europe. Following Ottoman conquests of the Black Sea, Red Sea and much of the Mediterranean, European traders were only allowed conditional admittance (Brummett 1994, 7; Hess 1973, 71). Having obtained these territories, commercial activity became subject to aforementioned state regulations and supervision thus limiting the export of key commodities such as timber, horses, grain and alum (Fleet 1999, 132–133). At the same time, Ottoman-Habsburg military conflict exacerbated Mediterranean volatility, thus 'cutting the arteries of Venetian seaborne trade' (Scammell 1981, 132). The Spanish and the Portuguese fared little better, failing to push into a Mediterranean rife with Ottoman-sponsored corsair attacks on merchant ships (Aksan 2005, 154). Thus besides facilitating trade, *Pax Ottomana* broke down the monopoly on commerce previously held by leading traders (primarily Venetian and Genoese) in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (Hess 1973, 59; Scammell 1981, 93–96), while increasingly exposing such trade to competition from Northwest European traders, as well as Ragusan, Armenian and Jewish merchants under Ottoman suzerainty (Love 2006, 6–7).

By blocking the most dominant European powers from their customary conduits to Eastern markets, the Ottomans directly compelled them to pursue alternative routes. Having lost its Black Sea monopoly, Genoa sought to circumvent the Ottoman passage to Indian and Far Eastern markets (Scammell 1981, 165) while turning to private business and financial operations in Western Europe and the Atlantic

(Scammell 1981, 170). With the Ottoman dominated Mediterranean inaccessible to Genoese capital, the Atlantic became a considerably more promising avenue for commercial activity (Coles 1968, 108; Issawi 1974, 11). Thus both in Spain and in Portugal, the relationship between Genoese merchant-financiers and New World colonialists grew as Genoa's position in the Eastern Mediterranean declined. The Atlantic ventures that this alliance gave rise to were ultimately possible through the investments of Genoese capital that had been forced out of the Mediterranean by the Ottomans: 'It was precisely the inter-city-state competition for access to Eastern markets and the threat of the expanding Ottoman Empire that led to the discovery of the Americas' (Mielants 2008, 85).

In the course of the Ottoman blockade, diplomatic agreements – 'capitulations'⁵² – came to play a major role, mediating European commercial and Ottoman geopolitical interests through alliance building on the one hand and blockading rivals on the other. The Genoese, Habsburgs, Spanish and Portuguese were all excluded, while the French (1536), English (1583) and Dutch (1612) benefitted from capitulations. Political in scope for the Ottomans, capitulations proved an economic boon for the merchants of Northwest Europe. These states that had been otherwise peripheral to the Mediterranean (and thus Eurasian) commerce were now able to trade under significantly advantageous terms compared to their competitors. Plugged into the security afforded by the Ottoman state along its trade routes, Northwest European connections with Asian commodity markets were significantly expedited (Bulut 2002, 201–205).

Over the course of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman blockade brought about a 'structural shift' (Mather 2009, 154) from the commercial dominance of city-states such as Genoa and Venice, towards France and then English and Dutch supremacy (Kasaba 2009, 57–58). The competition over markets that arose from this shift gave a major impulse to the development of company capitalism and anticipated the increasing unity of merchant and state interests that became a hallmark of the

⁵² For an exploration of capitulations see Eldem (2006).

English and Dutch politics in the seventeenth and eighteenth century (Mielants 2008, 84). These developments would lead to efforts to build permanent circuits of capital through the advance system, in turn escalating merchant intervention and control over international production (Banaji 2011, 270–273).

The states best placed to take advantage of this structural shift were those where the Ottoman geopolitical buffer was most keenly felt. As we have seen the protagonists most intensely involved in the continental conflicts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were concerned with the Ottoman presence in the Mediterranean and Southeast Europe. The Habsburg-Ottoman rivalry formed a geopolitical centre of gravity that often redirected imperial concerns away from England and the Low Countries. The Ottoman Empire therefore ‘played an important role in the balance of power in Europe in the sixteenth century and consequently in the rise of the nation-states in the West’ (İnalçık 2006, 120). The Dutch made use of the divisions in Christendom to take its long desired opportunity to break away from Habsburg domination (Nexon 2009, 188; Watson 1992, 222). The English were perpetually buffered from European geopolitical pressure precisely at a time when the continent was experiencing a demographic and commercial revival. And typical of Ottoman manoeuvres, both states were offered capitulations that weaved political alliance with commercial privileges in Ottoman territories. This was a major contributing factor to the integration of Levant and Atlantic trade in the seventeenth century and the ensuing rise of these Atlantic commercial powers. The Dutch became dependent on the Ottomans for supplies of their most heavily demanded raw materials – mohair yarn and wool – and equally dependent on the Ottoman market for one of its principal exports, woollen cloths (Bulut 2002, 218–222). England became similarly attached to both the import of wool from and export of woollen manufactures to the Ottoman Empire. In both cases, the attempts of merchants and financiers to monopolise and control such trade led to the establishment of strong trading companies.⁵³ As Levant

⁵³ For Ottoman commercial relations with the Dutch see Mehmet Bulut (2001); for the English see James Mather (2009)

trade fed Northwest Europe with staple commodities produced through extensive land use, the need for self-sufficient production at home was removed. By 'freeing' agricultural land from extensive production, land use around European towns and ports became geared towards more capital-intensive activity, such as (proto)industrial manufacturing (McGowan 1981, 3–5; Mielants 2008, 144). The concomitant increase in land value – especially among those plugged into interregional and international trade networks – increased the profitability and hence frequency of short-term land lets, sales of land and land transfers. This contributed to sixteenth century population increase, pressures on land, rises in rents and short-term tenures, depression in rural wages and growing demand for staples (McGowan 1981, 4). In short, the upsurge in Euro-Ottoman trade contributed to the preconditions of rural revolt and the primitive accumulation of capital in Northwest Europe.

5.3.3 The Ottoman buffer and English primitive accumulation

Aside from these new commercial privileges, the effects of the Ottoman geopolitical buffer were especially pronounced in English intra-lord class relations and the peculiar development of the English state. A variety of authors have stressed the significance of England's lack of involvement in continental geopolitical conflicts from 1450 onwards as a fundamental factor in its peculiar development of capitalism.⁵⁴ Theda Skocpol suggests that 'England could remain somewhat aloof from the continental military system' which made it 'uniquely responsive to commercial-capitalist interests' (Skocpol 1977, 1086). For Fernand Braudel this isolation abetted a highly beneficial protectionism helping England 'remain independent and to fend off interference from foreign capitalists... more successfully than any other European country' (Braudel 1977, 101–102). For Derek Sayer, England's privilege of isolation

⁵⁴ Interestingly each of the authors subsequently cited place a high degree of explanatory emphasis on England's island geography. Without seeking to discount this geographical factor, the prevalence of naval warfare by the sixteenth century suggests that England was eminently open to invasion should the will or compulsion have arisen (Rose 2002).

meant it was not 'squandering productive resources on Continental empire building, nor obliged, to the same degree or in the same ways as Continental powers, to defend itself against others' expansionist predilections' (Sayer 1992, 1391) during the precise period when agrarian capitalism was set to take hold.

One of the more peculiar features of Tudor 'absolutism' flowed directly from this isolation – a regression in the military resources held by the state and aristocracy. For example, in the 1470s the Spanish and English military numbered 20,000 and 25,000 men respectively. By the 1550s, Spain's manpower had risen to 150,000 while England's had fallen by five thousand to 20,000 (Kennedy 1989, 56). Disarmament among the English aristocracy was even more pronounced: 'in 1500, every English peer bore arms; by Elizabeth's time... only half the aristocracy had any fighting experience' (Anderson 1974, 125). This demilitarisation meant that England effectively 'skipped over' the development of strong, tax appropriating bureaucratic state structures characteristic of French and Spanish absolutism in the sixteenth century onwards (Skocpol 1977, 1086).

This exceptional historical trajectory proved especially conducive to capitalist development in the sixteenth century. Firstly, demilitarisation within the nobility meant limited access to the means of coercion required to raise feudal rates of exploitation. This inability to 'squeeze' (Brenner 1987b, 61) peasant surpluses meant that the option of dispossessing peasants and exploiting them through market mechanisms became an increasingly preferable means for ruling class reproduction (Wood 2002b, 53). Secondly, the English state did not possess the coercive or administrative strength to protect the peasantry from attempts by the nobility to 'engross, consolidate and enclose' land' (Skocpol 1977, 1086). This contrasted with the French state, which competed with the nobility over agrarian surpluses by habitually protecting the peasantry from attempts at dispossession (Brenner 1987a, 263). Thus, thirdly, isolation meant that the English ruling class was unusually homogenous (Aylmer 1990; Brenner 1987a, 256; Wood 2002b, 47), with a relative absence of social stratification across the state, the pre-existing landed aristocracy and an emergent

commercial class. Under conditions of demilitarisation, the English aristocracy became disassociated from 'patented peerage' (Anderson 1974, 127). Influence and office became a more important source of power for this 'untitled gentry' that would come to dominate English political and economic life (Sayer 1992, 1394). The English landowning class was thus 'unusually civilian in background, commercial in occupation and commoner in rank' (Anderson 1974, 127). The lack of social stratification engendered an intersection of landed classes, would be capitalists, and state officers that became a central plank of the landlord – capitalist tenant – wage labourer triad.

These three factors help to explain one of the fundamental propositions of Robert Brenner's argument of the origins of capitalism: that it was in England alone that agrarian revolts were met with a unified and successful attempt by the state and landed class to remove the peasantry from their land through the enclosures (Brenner 1987a, 252). As peasants were dispossessed, they turned to an alternative means to secure their means of subsistence and thus social reproduction: selling their labour to landlords and capitalist tenants in return for a wage (Brenner 1987b, 47). The persistent success of the state-nobility alliance in dispossessing the peasantry of the means of production therefore led to the emergence of 'free' class of wage-labourers. The social property relations through which surplus was appropriated were thus transformed, from the extra-economic means of feudalism to the 'economic' or 'market' mechanisms of agrarian capitalism.

Considering that English isolation was such a crucial condition for the processes outlined in the 'Brenner thesis', a fuller exposition of capitalism's origins requires that this isolation is satisfactorily accounted for. As the preceding argument has shown, this isolation should be understood as an inter-societal condition arising from the continental preoccupation with the Ottoman Empire. The peculiar social form that this isolation gave rise to proved especially conducive to the symbiotic unity of state and landed class interests that underpinned the growth of agrarian capitalism in England. When considered in this specifically international context, English

development in the sixteenth century can be best understood as a form of ‘combined development’; the developmental outcomes of an inter-societal condition rooted in the uneven relation of England to the Euro-Ottoman geopolitical milieu. Ottoman geopolitical pressure must therefore be seen as a cause in the emergence of agrarian capitalism in England.

5.4 Conclusion – The Ottoman Empire as a Vector of U&CD

The duality of Euro-Ottoman relations – both belligerent and collaborative – was thus a crucial driver in some of the key developments in this period. By establishing a node of international trade, the Ottomans contributed to the internationalisation of merchant activity and a cultural revival in Europe. But more significantly, through its military conflict with the Habsburgs, the Ottomans abetted the Reformation and the break-up of Habsburg hegemony. This gave Northwest Europe the geopolitical space to conduct modern state-building. In particular, this buffer gave rise to a peculiar fusion of interests among the landed nobility, capitalist tenants and the state in England, which was a crucial cause in the process of primitive accumulation. Moreover, through its geopolitical policies, the Ottomans actively and directly brought about a structural shift away from Mediterranean trade and the concomitant ascendancy of Italian city-states, toward the Atlantic powers that would eventually come to dominate the world through colonialism. It must be emphasised that none of these developments were sufficient conditions for the emergence of capitalism; there were numerous other causal chains – vectors of uneven and combined development – both European and extra-European that must be incorporated into a full understanding of capitalism’s origins (Anievas and Nişancioğlu 2013). Yet it is difficult to establish a proper appreciation of the key developments in sixteenth century history and the European trajectory towards capitalism without looking at the Euro-Ottoman relation as a fundamental determinant.

This additional empirical framework raises serious questions around the theorisation of capitalism's origins. A central contention of this chapter is that the spatially defined epistemological separation of Europe from the Ottoman Empire has had significant consequences for the manner in which we theorise such historical processes. In presenting this argument, I hope to have contributed to the recent explosion in literature that has sought to 'provincialize Europe,' by bringing out the international dimension of capitalism's development. But moreover, I have sought to provide an alternative theoretical framework – U&CD – within which this non-Eurocentric historical analysis can contribute to a renewed conceptualisation of capitalism's origins. For U&CD not only helps us capture the historical significance of interactive relations between societies, it also gives these relations theoretical expression, thus elevating their importance as a field of investigation; one that is irreducible to, yet fundamentally related to, the sociology and history of any given society. In doing so, U&CD broadens our field of vision beyond the confines of Eurocentrism, by internalising at the level of theory a dimension of concrete reality – 'the international' – hitherto considered external to dominant studies of the origins of capitalism.

This chapter thus provides a key complement to the observations of Chapter Four. By breaking the ontologically singular boundaries that have hermetically sealed off the analysis of European modernity from non-European processes, this chapter has shown that the strict epistemological division of West and East is both theoretically and historically unsustainable. By exposing and subverting the closed essentialism of both West and East as geo-historical categories, U&CD thus solves the limitations of the empirically narrow Eurocentric accounts of capitalist modernity and the theoretically shallow postcolonial alternatives.

This is best clarified by returning to the research question, and the divide in Ottoman historiography between the image of the 'sick man', incapable of modernity, and its opposite, the Ottomans as a modern(ising) actor. By dismissing the Empire as the 'sick man of Europe', Eurocentric accounts have tended to overlook the empirical

significance of the Ottomans on the very construction of Europe itself. However, the revision of this Eurocentrism has hitherto exclusively focussed on the Empire's own autonomous and endogenous modernising activities. The mistake in these accounts is therefore the assumption that the Ottoman history can only be redeemed if it conforms to a standard set by Eurocentric accounts, rather than subverting the very standards of Eurocentrism. Both sides are therefore theoretically deficient. By showing that the Ottoman Empire – a specifically non-modern, non-capitalist, non-European society – was able to fundamentally determine the origins of capitalist modernity in Europe, this chapter has shown that it is possible to overcome this deficiency with the non-Eurocentric theory of U&CD.

6. Rethinking Ottoman decline: The *longue durée* of imperial collapse

‘Your civilisation, it is a poison, but it is a poison that wakes one up and one cannot, one does not want to sleep anymore. One feels that if one were to close one’s eyes it would be in order to die’ Enver Pasha, 1911

Up to now, this thesis has sought to develop and substantiate a theoretical framework that can overcome the rigid epistemological separation of West and East and, in doing so, go beyond the ontological singularity that frames theorisations of both the Ottoman Empire and European modernity. In this final section, these points are reconsidered, but with specific reference to the third and final core assumption of Eurocentrism – *linear developmentalism*. I do so by offering an explanation of ‘the decline’ and eventual collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

This historical subject is especially significant; for it is here that the problem identified by the research question – the division of historians of this period into two seemingly contradictory and irreconcilable camps – finds its clearest expression. On the one hand, the dominant tendency among Ottomanists has been to read the end of Ottoman imperial expansionism at the gates of Vienna in 1683 as the starting point of a decline in the traditional and pre-capitalist state and society (Anderson 1974; Gibb and Bowen 1950; Weiker 1968). Unable to recover, the Empire experienced over two centuries of irreversible imperial involution, becoming eventually a ‘stagnant backwater’ (Lewis 2002, 28). This process reached its climax at the end of the First World War (WWI), with the Empire’s fragmentation into a multiplicity of nation-states. For authors working within the ‘decline thesis’, the defining question, ‘what went wrong?’ (Lewis 2003) is answered through a unilinear and homogenous conception of modernisation articulated either by the benevolent spread of Western

ideals (Gibb and Bowen 1950; Lewis 2002; Zurcher 1993) or the belligerent peripherisation of the Ottoman economy within the capitalist world-system (Kasaba 1988; Keyder 1987; Wallerstein, Decdeli, and Kasaba 1987). Among this camp, there is widespread agreement (with varying degrees of emphasis) on the impact of international pressures on Ottoman development.⁵⁵ Whether couched in the spread of Western ideas or the predatory economic logic of capitalism, the ubiquity of the 'Eastern Question' has rendered explicit the inter-societal dimension of Ottoman nineteenth century historical development. However, those taking this explicitly *linear developmentalist* view of involution have tended to overlook the conjunctural specificities and unevenness of Ottoman developments from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. Hence, even those especially attentive to 'the international' as an irreducible field of sociological causation have tended to replicate the strict division of inside and outside that is typical of realism (Brown 1984; Macfie 1996; Trimberger 1978). As a result, the classical decline thesis has never provided a convincing answer to the question: why were the Ottomans able to survive for around 250 years after the process of decline supposedly set in?

On the other hand, a number of recent analyses have subsequently reframed Ottoman history around the question 'what went on?' (Bulliet 2004, 47) by analysing the manner in which the Ottomans were able to successfully preserve the Empire (Abou-El-Haj 1991; Barkey 2008; Tezcan 2010). Some have gone as far as to suggest a wholesale revision of the decline thesis, arguing that transformations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were commensurate with global processes of

⁵⁵ See, for example, but not exclusively, Ahmad 1993; Ahmad 1996; Aksakal 2010; Anderson 1974; Bromley 1994; Brown 1984; Bull 1977; Deringil 2003; Deringil 2003; Findley 2008; Findley 2010; Findley 2004; Gibb and Bowen 1950; Göçek 1996; Haldon 1993; Hobsbawm 1987; Huntington 1968; Islamoğlu-Inan 2004; Karpat 1959; Karsh and Karsh 2001; Kasaba 1988; Keyder 1976; Keyder 1987; Lerner 1964; Lewis 2002; Lewis 2003; Macfie 1996; Makdisi 2002a; Makdisi 2002b; Naff 1984; Owen 1981; Rubin 2012; Trimberger 1978; Wallerstein 1979; Wallerstein, Decdeli, and Kasaba 1987; Wallerstein 1974; Watson 1992; Zurcher 1993; Zurcher 2010.

proto-modernisation (Abou-El-Haj 1991; Tezcan 2010). From a different angle, others have rejected the decline thesis by demonstrating that the efforts of Ottoman reformists were primarily measures to prevent the collapse of pre-existing (pre-capitalist) socio-political relations (Duzgun 2012; Hoffmann 2008). What unites these perspectives is a rejection of the linear developmentalism associated with externalist explanations. In their place, the answer to ‘what went on?’ is explicated through a focus on internal developments. However, either in their ‘proto-modern’ or ‘pre-capitalist’ iterations, such approaches have overstated the continuity of Ottoman social relations from the seventeenth to the twentieth century and, in doing so, missed the substantial degrees of transformation that occurred before, during and after the period commonly known as the *Tanzimat* (‘Re-Ordering,’ 1839-1876). In turn, the answer to ‘why did the Ottoman Empire collapse when it did?’ becomes inexplicable when situated in purely internal developments, leading many accounts to sneak in the international as a contingent, secondary and untheorisable determination (Abou-El-Haj 1991; Hoffmann 2008; Tezcan 2010).

To summarise the problem: in spite of a general recognition for the causal significance of ‘the international’, there has been no adequate attempt made to theorise it in a way commensurable with the historical sociology of the Empire. In doing so, a Eurocentric understanding of the rigid division between the incommensurable epistemologies of ‘East’ and ‘West’ tends to find its fullest expression among proponents and critics of the decline thesis. The outcome is the peculiar opposition of two contradictory images of the Ottoman Empire, in which neither side appears capable of grasping the historical specificity of the Ottomans’ imperial collapse.

As I have argued, U&CD provides a theoretical framework primed to coping with these theoretical challenges. This chapter will further put this claim to the test by seeking to show how far it can bridge the separation of pre-capitalist and capitalist dynamics on the one hand, and the international and domestic processes on the other. It does so by proposing a framework that overcomes the ontological singularity

and epistemological exteriority in extant accounts. In turn, it shows that such a framework provides an alternative conception of historical development that breaks with linear developmentalist accounts of Ottoman decline. In particular, while it is clear that both sides of the debate offer valuable insights, any tendency to reduce explanations of a two hundred year period to a single, essentialised characterisation ('pre-capitalist'; 'pre-modern'; 'proto-modern'; 'capitalist'; 'modern') will tend to miss substantial degrees of nuance and complexity in the actual historical process. A central plank of my argument in this chapter is that we need to move away from such unidirectional explanations, and break down the rigid application of these essentialised theoretical constructs onto historical processes. Instead, we must focus on bringing out the manner in which multiple determinations arising from multiple fields of causation combined in contradictory ways. In short, the task is to theorise this concrete complexity, rather than obliterating it. I argue that in bringing out this complexity, it is possible to offer a superior and fuller explanation for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

But this is not to say I am the first to employ U&CD in the context of Ottoman decline. Writing in 1896, Rosa Luxemburg's brief but inspired account of the Ottoman Empire anticipated both the theoretical development of U&CD and the historical collapse and fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire (Luxemburg 1896).⁵⁶ Acutely aware of the differentiated paths of development between the Ottomans and the Europeans, she argued that the former consisted of a 'strange mixture of modern and medieval principles' – a 'semi-feudalism.' However, because Luxemburg's development of U&CD was only latent and partial, and not systematic, she was unable to capture how changing international conditions across the nineteenth century reordered and redefined the trajectory of Ottoman decline. Equally, there was no development in her argument on how the Ottoman Empire and European imperialism were themselves

⁵⁶ See Neil Davidson (2012) for an account of Luxemburg's place in the intellectual genesis of U&CD.

geopolitically combined and interdependently related. Her analysis thus progressively slid into a linear stagism⁵⁷ and internalism.⁵⁸

More recently, Simon Bromley has drawn on U&CD in a masterful and in many ways unsurpassed account of Ottoman disintegration (Bromley 1994). He argues that ‘through this process of combined and uneven development... a systemic antagonism between capitalist nation-states and a tributary empire was worked out in which the former achieved a decisive victory by virtue of their economic vitality’ (Bromley 1994, 61). Throughout his subsequent account, transformations in Ottoman social relations are persistently suffused with the determinations that arose from the dynamic geopolitical relations of capitalism. Hence Bromley is, unlike Luxemburg, able to identify how the changing character of capitalist international relations shifted the geopolitical parameters through which the social reproduction of the Ottoman Empire was possible. He states that ‘it was always unlikely that any *localised* conflict would bring about a complete collapse of Ottoman rule. Rather, it was to take the *general* crisis of European imperialism to restructure the state system in the Middle East’ (Bromley 1994, 70 *my emphasis*). Bromley’s mainly successful attempt to burst the internalist boundaries of the decline thesis is undoubtedly an advance on previous accounts, and I offer an amended recapitulation of this argument in the final section of this chapter. However, this deployment of U&CD is, like Luxemburg’s attempt, partial. Because Bromley articulates unevenness and combination solely in terms of *geopolitical combination*, capitalism and tributary modes are once again imputed onto the distinct realms of outside and inside, respectively. Despite Bromley’s attentiveness to shifting capitalist geopolitical relations, these shifts are understood in terms of the unfolding logic of capitalist rivalry rather than the result of processes

⁵⁷ For example, she argues that ‘the separation of the Christian lands from Turkey’ and the development of ‘bourgeois institutions’ would prepare these nations for ‘the modern working class movement’ (Luxemburg 1896).

⁵⁸ Having situated reforms in the context of Russian military pressure, the international subsequently drops out of the analysis of the internal dissolution of the Ottomans, circumscribed by the precepts of Oriental Despotism. In particular the notion that the absence of class struggle precluded any capitalist development supports her conclusion that it was only through national liberation movements that the Eastern Question would be resolved. As a result, the efficacy of capitalist social relations as a determination is absent.

bound in the uneven and combined development of capitalism itself. In this way, his account does not substantially depart from classical theories of imperialism or WST, wherein capitalist dynamics of interstate rivalry collide with, and then overwhelm and destroy, the tributary Ottoman Empire.

My account differs from Bromley and Luxemburg in that I argue it is only possible to grasp the very emergence of such geopolitical rivalry, and the significant change this caused in geopolitical relations for the Ottoman Empire, through the causal mechanisms identified by U&CD. That is, tributary and capitalist social relations became concretely intermeshed (or internally related), rather than simply juxtaposed. In this sense, my account is closer to Trotsky's understanding of U&CD, which referred to contradictory amalgams of modern and archaic in both 'the mutual relationships of the various processes within one and the same country' as well as 'the relations of countries to each other' (Trotsky 1969, 255). That is, combination in the present account refers to sociological amalgamation *and* geopolitical combination as interdependent and mutually reinforcing processes. In this chapter I argue that the former form of combination captures the essence of the Ottoman *Tanzimat* reforms, while the latter form of combination can offer a theorisation of the 'Eastern Question.' It was the intersection – the combination – of these two processes that ultimately frames the present explanation for the decline of the Ottoman Empire.

In the first section I outline the *longue durée* developments of the Ottoman Empire over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In contrast to the literature reviewed above, I argue that despite the outward appearance of fiscal precarity, agrarian breakdown, patrimonial weakness and military defeat, the Ottoman Empire was not in decline, and nor was it experiencing radical modal change. In the second section, I will outline how the outcomes of these seventeenth and eighteenth century developments intersected with the geopolitics of capitalism over the course of the long nineteenth century. Here I show that the relations of unevenness between the tributary Ottoman Empire and capitalist West instantiated reforms which – in contrast to the preceding epoch – did fundamentally alter the

articulation and reproduction of the tributary mode. In the third section, I show that the Ottoman Empire subsequently became subject to ‘contradictions of sociological amalgamation’ (Allinson and Anievas 2010a, 473) that arose out of combinations of pre-capitalist and capitalist social relations. In the fourth section, I argue that it is in the context of these social conditions and contradictions that it is possible to properly grasp the eventual collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

6.1 Continuity and change in the *longue durée*

As we have seen, the Ottoman ruling-class was dependent on geopolitical accumulation for its social reproduction and material accumulation; it provided *timar* holders with opportunities to acquire larger and more productive land allocations, and abetted and legitimised the expansion of the Sultanic household through the *devşirme* system. The impulse for changes in the configuration of ruling-class relations was therefore intimately related to the conditions of geopolitical accumulation. Fighting wars on both Safavid and European fronts, and the military revolution in Europe caused a slowdown of Ottoman conquests in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Barkey 2008, 201; Salzmann 1993, 398). With no outlet for the material demands of both provincial and central sections of the ruling class, the tensions between the two over control and distribution of agrarian surplus came to the fore. Over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Ottomans sought to respond to these new geopolitical challenges through military reform, which instantiated a series of shifts in provincial relations of production with the decline of the *timar* system and the subsequent rise of tax-farming.⁵⁹ Together, these changes re-ordered the configuration of intra-ruling class relations between centre and province.

⁵⁹ These were allocations of land, auctioned by the state to the highest bidder, in return for a down payment of cash. The tax-farm holder was, in return, able to collect taxes on this land at a fixed rate (Barkey 2008, 232).

Military reforms involved a move away from the *sipahi* mounted cavalry towards an infantry trained in firearms (Barkey 1994, 69).⁶⁰ For an empire whose provincial authority resided in this section of the *askeri* class, the adoption of more advanced military techniques became predicated on rearticulating social relations between the patrimonial state and landed nobility (Kunt 1983, 80). *Sipahis*, conscious that military reform constituted a challenge to their social basis of power, displayed a significant degree of resistance to adopting firearms and eventually became marginalised (Findley 2006, 70). To fill the gap, the state expanded the Janissary corps and recruited mercenary units (*sekban*) from the *reaya* classes (Griswold 1983, 12–18; 157).

Subsequently, the nature of taxation was transformed as the upkeep of these troops ran up against the limits of agrarian production. The tributary form of surplus appropriation involved no compulsion or dynamic toward the improvement in forces of production, and limited bouts of economic growth were predominantly dependent on geopolitical accumulation (Bromley 1994, 44). When this was blocked, the only avenue for expanding surplus was through an increase in the rate of exploitation by extending extra-economic claims to peasant surplus (Barkey 2008, 230). As appropriation was based on taxation, this led to a rise in taxes and the rates at which they were levied.⁶¹ Moreover, the influx of New World precious metals into Ottoman territories saw a transformation in the Ottoman tax system as dues shifted from kind to cash, and coin devaluations resulted in inflationary pressures (Pamuk 2000, 142).

These two strands – the response to the limits of agrarian production and changing relations based on military reform – intersected with the closure of geopolitical accumulation as an outlet for surplus appropriation. There was subsequently a shift in military upkeep from *sipahi* soldiers supported by kind from *timar* land allocations, to infantry with firearms supported by cash payments from the

⁶⁰ The number of *sipahis* fell from 87,000 in the 1560s to 8,000 in 1630 (Barkan 1975b, 20).

⁶¹ The *cizye*, head tax on non-Muslims was raised from 50–80 *akce* in mid-sixteenth century to 240 *akce* in the mid-seventeenth. *Avariz* taxes were transformed from an occasional levy to a permanent tax, becoming the treasury's largest single source of revenue in the seventeenth century. *Avariz* itself was raised from 60–80 *akce* in mid-sixteenth to 300–400 or more in the mid seventeenth (Darling 2006, 119). From the seventeenth century onwards new extraordinary taxes were introduced for wartime. This period also saw the emergence of locally specific taxes whose collection was illegal but tolerated (Darling 2006, 120).

treasury (Darling 2006, 118).⁶² Fiscally limited by stagnant agrarian production, the state increasingly ran deficits to pay for military wages.⁶³ Equally, these agrarian-fiscal limits meant that it was only possible to maintain *sekban* troops over the duration of their service, and not beyond through some permanent arrangement (such as *timar* land grants) (Haldon 1993, 174). As such, they were disbanded at the end of military campaigns, throwing many into vagrancy and banditry (Griswold 1983, 13–17). The influx of *sipahis* that had lost their land to military defeats in Southeastern Europe combined with *celali* ‘bandit’ activity rural communities, further undermining rural stability (Griswold 1983, 57). In the midst of the agrarian rebellions and peasant uprisings that emerged out of these conditions, the Ottomans struggled to prevent rural populations migrating *en masse* into Ottoman cities (Haldon 1993, 174; Kasaba 2009, 59).

Such developments necessitated an overhaul of the Ottoman tax-system. As demands for cash grew, the state turned to tax-farming as the primary means for raising revenues (Haldon 1993, 176). By the eighteenth century, the usual three year allocation of tax-farming (typically restricted to mines and mints), had grown into the predominant form of land organisation allocated on a life-term basis (*malikane*). The emergence of tax-farming resulted in a series of fundamental shifts in class relations in the Ottoman Empire. To begin with, lifetime tax-farming facilitated the semi-privatisation of land and made the access to it semi-dependent on the market (Barkey 2008, 233). In many cases production on these lands became semi-commercialised (Khoury 2002, 87), especially in territories that were integrated into international commodity markets (Barkey 2008, 239).⁶⁴ This opened access to agrarian surplus extraction to private individuals, households, merchants and financiers (McGowan 1994, 660–662). In the process, tax-farming empowered wealthy provincial households

⁶² By 1630 military wages formed 77 per cent of the Ottoman budget (Darling 2006, 118)

⁶³ In 1660–61 the treasury was 12million *akces* in the debt; by 1692–3 this figure had risen to 262 million *akces* (Barkey 2008, 231).

⁶⁴ My repeated use of the word ‘semi’ here refers to the incompleteness of this transformation, as these changes were articulated through state owned, non-market and non-commercial social relations bound up in the tributary mode. It is especially worth noting that the peasants’ inalienable rights to land remained well up until the mid-nineteenth century (Khoury 2002, 106). The combined nature of this development will be given further theoretical elaboration in the following section.

(known as *derebeys*, *pashas* and *ayans* depending on their social position and region), Istanbul elites and state bureaucrats (Barkey 2008, 234).

The ability of tax-farmers to exploit agrarian productivity was deepened as powerful households took over the traditional functions of the state in the provinces (Barkey 2008, 218). Members of the military class were replaced by provincial financial supervisors in the role of tax collection from the 1650s onwards, placing in *ayan* hands the means to supervise and control revenue collection (Khoury 2002, 56–57). The wealth and authority derived from this position allowed *ayans* to accrue large provincial armies, particularly through the recruitment of vagrant *sekban* troops, who hired out their services to highest bidder (İnalcık 1977b, 27). Due to abuses by former state appointed governors, local *kadis* often turned to *ayans* for assistance, leading to a confluence of interest between the *ulema* and local power holders (Bogaç 2003, 71–75; İnalcık 1977b, 28). As *ayans* became responsible for maintaining the functioning of rural communities, they came to be seen as essential to the welfare of local populations (İnalcık 1977b, 47–48). Through this process, state-province relations were significantly redefined. The intersection of high office and tax-farming meant *ayans* became what Carter Findley describes as “contractors”, taking charge of revenue collection, military-recruitment and provisioning for the state’ (Findley 2006, 7). In this way central control was redefined away from ‘top-down’ governance towards ‘negotiated’ forms of authority between centre and province (Darling 2006, 124).

Such a redefinition instantiated significant changes in the relation between *reaya* peasantry and the ruling class. New potentialities for social mobility started to break down formal distinctions between the two (Barkey 2008, 208; Kunt 1983, 67). The more powerful *celali* bands could use their numbers and strength to procure admittance to the Ottoman ruling class (Griswold 1983, 39–44). Those outside of the ruling class found they were able to enter into the service of powerful households, or through bribery become members of the ruling class itself (İnalcık 1977b, 39–40). But despite what Tezcan problematically calls the ‘proto-democratisation’ of the Ottoman Empire (Tezcan 2010, 10), for most *reaya* the changes in agrarian relations proved regressive.

Short term contracts on land led to the abuse of the peasantry as tax-farm holders sought to maximise benefits to the detriment of long term investment (Barkey 2008, 232). In the absence of government supervision and intervention, the controls maintaining agrarian production and limiting the rate of peasant exploitation were either lifted or became unenforceable. Newly accrued coercive powers gave *ayans* the means to squeeze agrarian production legally, through extended taxation and coercively tying peasants to the land, and illegally through non-sanctioned taxes (*salgun*) that were ignored by the state (İnalcık 1977b, 27; Kasaba 1988, 25). This exposed the peasantry to higher degrees of exploitation leading to peasant flight and rural instability (Kasaba 1988, 26; Kasaba 2009, 79–81; McGowan 1994, 681).

In the mid-18th century, a French consul in Cairo pithily captured the challenges faced by the Ottoman state: ‘desolate provinces, disconcerted people, and insufficient and undisciplined militia’ (cited in Kasaba 2009, 60). This blend of agrarian-fiscal weakness, military reform and *ayan* preponderance sparked a number of class conflicts in the Ottoman centre and provinces. Fierce, sometimes violent, competition developed between *ayans* as access to state responsibilities and tax-farms became the primary means for securing wealth and power (İnalcık 1977b, 32). The influx of dispossessed *sipahi* and *celali* coalesced with increased pressure of peasant production to create a number of rural rebellions (Goldstone 1988, 112). In the Ottoman centre grievances emerged over Janissary pay, households’ access to power, and masses aggrieved by tax burdens, rural displacement and ruling class decadence. The joining of these frustrations in a series of rebellions repeatedly shook the old patrimonial household (Barkey 2008, 206–218); following the execution of Sultan Osman II in 1622 seven out of the next fourteen Sultans were deposed (Barkey 2008, 206).⁶⁵

The outward appearance of military defeats, fiscal precarity, agrarian breakdown and patrimonial weakness has led many to understand this as a period of imperial decline (Gibb and Bowen 1950; Lewis 2002). More nuanced approaches have sought to

⁶⁵ ‘So much,’ reflected Voltaire around the time, ‘for these monarchs who are so absolute!’ (Voltaire cited in Deringil 1999, 4)

reframe this period as one of radical, even revolutionary social change (Abou-El-Haj 1991; Tezcan 2010). Despite great variation among them such perspectives have tended to essentialise the categories upon which their respective characterisations have been built (decline, feudalisation, decentralisation, modernisation), and in the process overlook the intersection of continuity *and* change that characterise this period. Consequently a dual problem arises. Proponents of the decline thesis are unable to explain why the Ottoman Empire was able to survive for another three hundred years after the start of decline set in. Revisionists are unable to explain why the Ottoman Empire didn't follow the same path as European states or maintain itself in the aftermath of WWI. In between these perspectives we are left with the puzzle, why did the Ottoman Empire collapse when it did?

Although such perspectives do tend to capture some degree of the social transformation that the Ottoman Empire was witnessing, none of these changes constituted a fundamental transformation in the tributary mode of production in the Ottoman Empire. This was rather a period in which the intra-ruling class struggle between patrimonial authority and landed nobility was increasingly tipping in the favour of the latter. The alienation of state revenues to this class, the weakening of state control over agrarian production and increasing autonomy of the provincial power holders were all indications of this (Haldon 1993, 176). However, these changes 'only rarely involved any political confrontation' and never led to a fundamental challenge or overthrow of the patrimonial authority (Haldon 1993, 181). The state retained its right to confiscate land through which tax-farms could be returned to state ownership. The state also maintained its ability to co-opt dissident sections into the ruling class. Even during heightened bouts of struggle, each overthrow of the sultan rearticulated the composition of the Ottoman state but never challenged the very institution of the tributary state or patrimonial household itself. The *ayans'* position of authority was itself heavily dependent both materially and ideologically on their legitimisation by the Ottoman state, either through legally recognised forms of taxation or the bestowal of formal political authority (Haldon 1993, 184). In these

ways, the constraints of the Ottoman state 'still served as constitutive elements in the evolution of the relations of distribution... They represented, in other words, elements of the conditions of existence of that system' (Haldon 1993, 182)

The Ottoman Empire was able to reproduce itself because of its very ability to maintain allegiance through mechanisms of consent and coercion between the centre and province. As Dina Rizk Khoury argues, this was a period in which a new kind of 'compromise was reached between local and central state elites' (Khoury 2002, 46). For Karen Barkey, *contra* the centralisation-decentralisation binary, these molecular changes in social relations between different sections of the Ottoman ruling class revived the Ottoman treasury, whilst also renewing ties of dependency between province and state (Barkey 2008, 235–236). In doing so the Ottoman state was able to strengthen its ability to make war (Khoury 2002, 72), exploit the peasantry (Khoury 2002, 46–47), and 'Ottomanise' the political culture of its provincial populations (Khoury 2002, 77). Seen in this light, proponents of the decline thesis have tended to mistake imperial degradation with a flexible renegotiation of the relations between centre and province in the interests of sustaining the tributary empire. This goes some way toward explaining both the endurance of the Ottoman system as well as its eventual 'backwardness' in contrast to the rapid capitalist development of Western Europe – for it was the enduring ability of the tributary mode to stave off crisis that prevented the emergence of levels of societal crisis that would have necessitated revolutionary modal transformation.

Such changes provide the appropriate context within which the actual modal transformations that occurred in the long nineteenth century can be understood. Beginning with the reforms of Selim III (1789–1807) and Mahmud II (1808–1839), and culminating in the *Tanzimat* (1839–1876), the nineteenth century witnessed a prolonged attempt of the centre to re-assert its dominance over its provinces by re-centralising the government's political and economic power. Unlike previous attempts, this involved a definitive attempt to obliterate contending sections within the ruling class – namely *ayans*, the *ulema* and the Janissaries (Trimberger 1978, 66–

67). Consequently, unlike previous rounds of centralisation, provincial notables were compelled to articulate their resistance to state centralisation by way of direct political challenge – through secession and takeover – rather than negotiation and accommodation. And unlike previous periods, the struggle between centre and province was articulated through conspicuously Western notions of nationalism and modernisation.

In short, this period witnessed a prolonged crisis in this form of ruling-class reproduction, as the means of both coercion and consent progressively lost efficacy, leading to the fragmentation of the empire into a multiplicity of nation-states. In order to explain how and why these shifts occurred at this particular conjuncture we are required to broaden our view, and approach the question from the vantage point of the international. For, as the ensuing argument outlines, it was the combination of these *long durée* developments with the changing geopolitical conditions of capitalist development that ultimately led to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

6.2 Relations of unevenness in the 19th century

The long nineteenth century began for the Ottomans with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca 1774 and Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. These two events would define a new and original relation to the geopolitics of Europe – a peculiar 'whip of external necessity' – that came to be famously dubbed 'The Eastern Question'. Signed in the aftermath of military defeat at the hands of Russians, the 1774 Treaty started a general trend of treaties and diplomatic agreements signed by the Ottomans under unfavourable terms.⁶⁶ European states were able to acquire capitulations in return for financial and military support which, under certain circumstances, conferred protection rights over religious and ethnic minorities of Ottoman society. European

⁶⁶ Küçük Kaynarca ceded Crimea to the Russians (and with it the Crimean khan's armies); the Treaty of Jassy (1792) ceded Georgia to Russia; Bonaparte annexed Egypt in 1798; the Treaty of Bucharest (1812) acknowledged the loss of Bessarabia to Russia; in the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), the Ottomans withdrew from Moldova and Wallachia under Russian duress; the Treaty of London (1830) recognised the independence of Greece. Further, and more extensive, territorial losses came in the aftermath of the Ottoman-Russo war of 1877-1878, and the Balkan wars 1911-1913, which are detailed on page 207 of this chapter.

nations were also able to secure agreements providing foreign merchants trade privileges within Ottoman territories. Although capitulations had functioned as a diplomatic mechanism between European states and the Ottomans, it wasn't until the late 18th and early 19th centuries that these relations could be seen to have moved 'from a situation of equality or even of relative Ottoman superiority to one that is best described as an effective domination or influence of Western economic actors over Ottoman markets, production and consumption' (Eldem 2006, 284). From here on the 'developmental backwardness' of the Ottomans became starkly evident to both European Great Powers and the Ottomans alike.

Hence, the turn of the nineteenth century was also distinctive in that Britain replaced France as the dominant commercial actor in Ottoman territories.⁶⁷ The treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774), the opening of the Black Sea to foreign ships (1783), and the French expulsion from Egypt (1799) created a vacuum in Ottoman trade that was filled by Britain who, spurred by the industrial revolution, had risen to hegemonic preponderance internationally (Owen 1981, 83).⁶⁸ In accordance with British commitments to free trade, this involved the opening of markets to cheap British manufactures⁶⁹, while reordering the Ottoman economy around the supply of raw materials to the West (Pamuk 1987, 26). Caught between an increasingly centralising state and cheap French and British imports, Ottoman industrial development was thrown into decline (Owen 1981, 93; Pamuk and Williamson 2011, 166).

The economic colonisation of the Ottoman Empire deepened as the state's fiscal vulnerability was accentuated and eventually exposed in the aftermath of the Crimean War in 1856. To finance the war, the Ottomans were required to take out what would prove to be an unserviceable loan. This led to the bankruptcy of the

⁶⁷ It is worth noting that some regions of the Ottoman Empire experienced commercialisation before the periodisation offered here. Commercial crops such as cotton, tobacco and maize appeared in Rumelia and the Levant from 1750s onwards, mostly for export to France and the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Beinin 2001, 22). However, this was confined to relatively small locales, and it was later, under the demand of the industrially advanced economy of Britain, that a substantial boom in export production took place (Beinin 2001, 44–45). Moreover, the periodisation offered here seeks to connect this increasing commercialisation to the geopolitics of British hegemony.

⁶⁸ The value of British exports to the Ottoman Empire rose from £150,000 in 1815 to over £3 million in by 1850. By 1855 this had more than doubled to £6.6 million.

⁶⁹ By 1913 two-thirds of Ottoman imports were manufactures (Pamuk 1987, 26).

Ottoman state in 1875 and resulted in a significant transfer of fiscal autonomy to the European dominated Ottoman Public Debt Administration (OPDA) in 1881 (Aksakal 2010, 59). In short, this period was marked by a qualitative change in Ottoman-European relations brought about by the explosive productive force of capitalism now imbued with the technical capacity of the industrial revolution. With the crystallisation of these relations of unevenness, European Great Powers increasingly came to the view that the Empire's collapse was inevitable, and plotted its eventual partition both openly and in secret (Brown 1984, 35–36).

However, relations between the Ottoman Empire and its European neighbours were neither even nor consistent. What came to characterise Ottoman-European relations – and, I argue, what constitutes a defining element of nineteenth century Ottoman geopolitics – were the paradoxical attempts of European Powers to simultaneously undermine *and* prop up the ailing empire. This was itself a concrete form of geopolitical combination in which the ‘world bourgeoisie... made the stability of its State system profoundly dependent on the unstable pre-bourgeois bulwarks of reaction’ (Trotsky 1969, 108).

The impulse for this paradox emerged out of British imperial hegemony in this period. Alex Anievas argues that the maintenance of the British status quo was based on a dual policy involving ‘the protection of overseas investments, colonial possessions and export markets, on the one hand, and the defence against the domination of the European continent by a single power, on the other. The British “national interest” was thus “defined globally”’ (Anievas 2014). In accordance with the exigencies of British hegemony, France's brief occupation of Egypt in 1799 brought Britain into the game as *protector* of the Ottoman Empire. Concerned that first France and later Russia would envelop the Ottoman territories and threaten their dominance in India, British policy focussed on shoring up the Ottomans against their rivals (Mather 2009, 133). Consequently the Ottomans emerged as a crucial actor in European geopolitics, acting as key ‘power balancer’ in the rivalries among the British, French, Russians and later Germans (Karsh and Karsh 2001, 17; Kayaoğlu 2010b, 111).

The 'Eastern Question' was born. With it came the curiously ambivalent relationship between the 'sick man of Europe' and the Great Powers:

'On the one hand, many European leaders came to understand the grave risks that total Ottoman collapse posed to the general peace... On the other hand, through their wars and support of the separatist goals of rebellious Ottoman subjects, European states abetted the very process of fragmentation that they feared and were seeking to avoid' (Quataert 2005, 56).

Mirroring these changing geopolitical conditions, the Ottomans became fully conscious that they had been thrown into a dynamic of 'coercive comparison' (Barker 2006, 78), whereby the radical development of capitalism in Western Europe had created a condition of developmental backwardness within the Empire. For Ottoman statesmen the necessity to catch up with their more advanced neighbours was demonstrated through two interrelated concrete developments which turned their European 'foes into tutors.' Firstly, the discontent of local notables was now articulated through direct existential challenges to the Ottoman Empire itself. The events of the Serbian uprising (1804-1813), Greek Revolution (1821-32) and conflicts with the Egyptian governor Mehmet Ali (1831-41) made it clear to Ottoman statesmen that recurrent provincial challenges to the empire could only be mitigated in the long term by rearticulating the relationship between centre and province. The Ottoman state needed to reassert its dominance over its provinces by adjusting the internal balance of power and recentralising the government's political and economic power (Kasaba 1988, 49-50). Reformers thus persistently argued that if the Ottoman Empire were to be maintained, its economic and military autonomy would have to be restored and notions of governance and citizenship reconstituted (Ahmad 1996, 9; Güllalp 1994, 166; Trimberger 1978, 72).

Secondly, the involvement of Russia, Britain and France in the events in Greece and Egypt demonstrated to Ottoman statesmen that the reproduction of the Empire was now intertwined with the international relations of European Great Powers (Philliou 2011, 117-119). In turn, many of these modernising reforms came at the

behest of outside influence, tied to diplomatic agreements and peace treaties, or indirectly from Ottoman elites seeking to gain diplomatic assistance from European states (Kayaoğlu 2010b, 116). The intervention of Britain on the side of the Ottomans during Mehmet Ali's rebellion prefigured the Balta Liman Convention of 1838, which formally recognised British-Ottoman free trade agreements (Kasaba 1993, 217–219).⁷⁰ In 1839 the *Hatt-i Serif of Gülhane* (Imperial Edict of the Rose House) instantiated the *Tanzimat* by announcing an extension of rights to non-Muslims and the abolishment of tax-farming (Findley 2008, 9–37). In order to secure British and French assistance in the Crimean War, the Ottomans implemented the Reform Edict of 1856 – which cemented equality between Muslim and non-Muslim citizens in taxation, public employment and military service – and the Imperial Land Law of 1858 – which ratified property rights, facilitating the commodification of land and dispossession of peasants (Aytekin 2009, 935–951). Similarly, the establishment of the Ottoman constitution in 1876 sought to undercut European plans ‘to settle the Eastern crisis by imposing territorial adjustment and political reforms on the Ottomans’ (Brown 1984, 70). The next section will elucidate the detail and importance of these reforms as an instance of combined development, wherein capitalist and tributary social relations were wedded in an uneasy and contradictory amalgam.

6.3 Combination and the contradictions of sociological amalgamation

Beginning prototypically with the military reforms of Selim III and Mahmud II, and then deepening under the rubric of the *Tanzimat*, the nineteenth century was a long period of socio-political modification for the Ottomans. Widespread changes were introduced into the political and social fabric of the empire, which introduced new forms of statecraft, ideology and social relations derived from Western influences.

⁷⁰ The Convention agreed to the abolishment of economic regulation and monopolies, while British merchants were exempted from price regulation and taxation on internal trade.

However, typical of uneven and combined development, these Western techniques were refracted through already existing tributary social relations, creating a contradictory amalgam of tributary and capitalist social relations. In the first part of this section I outline the primary vectors through which such combination occurred. In the second part I demonstrate how these led to a variety of contradictory outcomes which undermined the reproduction of the Ottoman Empire.

6.3.1 The Tanzimat – a capitalist-tributary combination

Three reforms that fell under the *Tanzimat* require particular emphasis, as they fundamentally rearticulated the two axes of class relations typical of the tributary mode – between ruling and ruled class, and within the ruling classes themselves. Firstly, reforms in Ottoman law, reaching their zenith with the Imperial Land Code of 1858, were geared towards establishing the abstract individual as the subject of law, codifying rights to private property and formalising legal equality of individuals (Aytekin 2009, 937). Due to the multi-religious composition of the Ottoman Empire, such a shift to modern conceptions of citizenship had a specifically religious component to it. By establishing formal equality between citizens of different faiths, the reforms sought, on the one hand, to eliminate Muslim's legal privileges and, on the other, to bring back under direct Ottoman state jurisdiction its Christian subjects that had 'become protégés of foreign states' (Quataert 2005, 66). This indicated an understanding that the political cohesion and economic growth of the empire would be easier to maintain through the cultivation of a common identity in law (Islamoğlu-Inan 2004, 288, 294; Toprak 2007, 31).

Secondly, reflecting British liberal ideas (Findley 2008, 18), the tax farming system and monopolies were abolished *de jure* (but not *de facto*) (Findley 2008, 19). 'Mixed courts' comprising Ottomans and foreign merchants were established to mediate and adjudicate in commercial tribunals, regulating trading practices and facilitating commerce (Toprak 2007, 34). By 1858, the Imperial Land Code had facilitated the alienability of land through sale, mortgaging and other commercial transactions

(Aytekin 2009, 938). An expansion of inheritance rights was gradually implemented, extending as far as some limited gender equity over claims to property (Aytekin 2009, 941). Ambiguity in relation to public access to wastelands effectively encouraged enclosures of open hills and woodland (Aytekin 2009, 945). Ottoman commitments to liberalisation entailed the break-up of indigenous monopolies, urban guilds and large landholdings, further opening economic space for Western (primarily British) penetration (Pamuk and Williamson 2011, 166).

Thirdly, the composition of the Ottoman state was radically altered in order to effectively implement and administer these changes. *Sipahi* troops had steadily declined from the seventeenth century onwards and the Janissaries were dismantled by force in 1826 by Mahmud II (Finkel 2006, 435–439). Then, under the *Tanzimat*, military positions were formally bureaucratised and rationalised through the establishment of salaried positions and the reorganisation of state functions into departments and ministries. Educational reforms encouraged the formation of new elites that would staff these positions (Findley 2008, 22–23). From 1856, non-Muslims were given access to the functions of the state, abetting the redefinition of the Ottoman ruling-class away from Muslim primacy (Findley 2008, 19). Subsequently, the state itself rapidly expanded in both size and power,⁷¹ progressively subsuming wider spheres of social life within its jurisdiction, and controlling, weakening or destroying pre-existing local power holders as well as challenging the social basis of *ulema* power (Findley 2008, 20–22). Such changes were designed to improve the fiscal strength of the state, by rationalising taxation and controlling tax collection directly at local level (Findley 2008). Through methods in statecraft taken from European foes the tributary Ottoman state was thus able to extend its authority over its subjects and other sections of the ruling class to a higher degree than at any other point in Ottoman history (Quataert 2005, 62–64).

⁷¹ Civil officials that totalled around 2,000 people at the end of the eighteenth century had reached 35,000–70,000 by 1908 (Findley 2008, 21). The regular army mushroomed from 24,000 soldiers in 1837 to 120,000 regular troops by 1880 (Quataert 2005, 66).

According to Gülp, the *Tanzimat* 'signified the beginnings of the emergence of a civil society based on market relations and its separation from the state... a centrally regulated set of impersonal and universal rules replaced the traditional and customary relations of power' (Gülp 1994, 168). However, care must be taken not to overstate the 'completeness' of capitalistic transformation in the nineteenth century. To situate these changes in Marxist parlance, the initial attempts at reform reflected the pressures and requirements placed on the tributary mode of production by international capitalist circulation, and not an internal transformation brought about by any domestic capitalist relations of production. Such a distinction is important, as Marx makes clear when differentiating between two paths of capitalist subsumption:

'The transition from the feudal mode of production takes place in two different ways. The producer may become a merchant and a capitalist, in contrast to the agricultural natural economy and the guild-bound handicraft of medieval urban industry. This is the really revolutionary way. Alternatively, however, the merchant may take control of production himself. But however frequently this occurs as a historical transition... it cannot bring about the overthrow of the old mode of production by itself, but rather preserves and retains it as its own precondition' (Marx 1981, 452).⁷²

The 'modernisation' of the *Tanzimat* period was a case of the latter rather than the former. Previous rounds of capitalist development in Western Europe had inaugurated significantly different international conditions within which any ensuing transitions to capitalism took place, thus precluding the possibility of their repetition in the Ottoman Empire. The emergence of capitalist states in Western Europe created developmental conditions which blocked the first 'really revolutionising path', and instead facilitated the second. The *Tanzimat* – instantiated as it was by a specifically tributary ruling class seeking to preserve its own reproduction – was therefore disassociated from any fundamental transformation of the forms of production. Its

⁷² Elsewhere, Marx similarly argues that 'capital subsumes the labour process as it finds it, that is to say, it takes over an *existing labour process*, developed by different and more archaic modes of production... The work may become more intensive, its duration may be extended, it may be more continuous or orderly under the eye of the interested capitalist, but in themselves these changes do not affect the character of the actual labour process, the actual mode of working' (Marx 1976, 1021)

ultimate aim was still circumscribed by the tripartite tributary economic principles of provisionism, fiscalism and traditionalism (Genç 2000, 187). Hence, reforms tended to focus on fiscal centralisation of the pre-existing surplus appropriated by tax-farming, rather than economic development as such (Beinin 2001, 51; Quataert 1994, 856–861). With little economic incentive or political will to break the dominance of the Ottoman ruling class or commodify labour power, tributary mechanisms of surplus extraction continued to predominate (Pamuk 1987, 96–106). Surpluses continued to be appropriated from small landholding, where peasant households and sharecroppers were exploited primarily through the means of state taxation and labour dues (Kasaba 1988, 77; Pamuk 1987, 88–89, 99–100, 105).⁷³ Increasing squeezes on peasant productivity through higher taxes, labour dues and modern disciplining techniques led to the immiseration and displacement of the majority of Ottoman subjects (Atabaki 2007, 9; Kasaba 1988, 66–67). That is, capitalist relations and political forms were only able to gain a foothold by combining with pre-existing tributary relations and production processes, deepening and intensifying them to unprecedented levels. The ‘incompleteness’ and ‘conservatism’ of Ottoman ‘modernisation’ is neatly captured by Atilla Aytekin, who states the 1858 Land Code was ‘an attempt to preserve the social cohesion of Ottoman society without having to initiate a major land reform’ (Aytekin 2009, 948). In sum, the *Tanzimat* and its associated transformations in social relations was, from the vantage point of the Ottoman state, less a capitalist revolution but more an attempt to maintain a tributary ruling class by capitalist means.⁷⁴

The very preservation of the Ottoman Empire, and its continued independence from formal colonisation, meant that the state became a crucial node through which

⁷³ Despite this general trend, there were regional variations within the Empire. And typical of the uneven and combined development of capitalism, some areas experienced the consolidation of larger landholdings, wage labourers, and ‘indebted serfs’ (McGowan 1981, 67–73; Owen 1981, 12; Pamuk 1987, 82–106; Quataert 1994, 861–875). But these were largely exceptional, and specific to cotton and sugar production (Beinin 2001, 56)

⁷⁴ These Ottoman reforms were reminiscent of Trotsky’s analysis of contemporaneous developments in Russia: ‘European armament and European loans – both indubitable products of a higher culture – led to a strengthening of Czarism, which delayed in its turn the development of the country’ (Trotsky 2007, 24–26).

external capitalist interests were mediated (Pamuk 1987, 77). In this process, the intersection of commodity markets, credit and state power became the most effective levers through which Ottoman surpluses in agrarian production were alienated to European capitalists (Rubin 2012, 996). That is, capital was able to gain a foothold locally by ‘preserving and retaining’ these tributary relations ‘as its precondition’, wherein profits came to be increasingly drawn from the ‘circulation process’ (Banaji 2011, 293, 304).

Under the growing fiscal demands of the state, and increasing powers of local notables, more peasants became compelled to produce beyond subsistence level (Aytekin 2008, 294). It created an ‘obligation to commercialise’ as peasants increasingly produced cash crops and raw materials for the market, in order to supplement their incomes (Aytekin 2008, 295). Credit – garnered from European capitalists and mediated through local merchant money lenders – helped facilitate this (Owen 1981, 89). Cash loans were taken out to purchase means of subsistence and meet tax payments (Aytekin 2008, 299). Advances in kind and in cash were used to acquire means of production (such as seeds and animal feed) and peasant labour (Aytekin 2008, 300; Beinin 2001, 33). In some cases, even commodities for sale on the market were loaned, in return for cash payments (Aytekin 2008, 300). Either through credit or the market, surpluses could be appropriated without taking direct control of the land or the labour process. Local merchant-usurers thus became the ‘hinge’ between European capital and small-scale peasant and artisan production (Owen 1981, 88). In the case of the Tobacco Régie Company – a state tobacco monopoly financed by foreign banks – surpluses were appropriated directly by foreign debtors to pay off Ottoman debts (Owen 1981, 204–205). Agrarian production, relatively unchanged from its typical tributary form of surplus appropriation, thus persisted and expanded under the demands of state taxation, credit and the export market (Owen 1981, 208; Pamuk 1987, 83).⁷⁵ The efficacy of these mechanisms meant that by 1913

⁷⁵ This is not to say that there were no moves towards industrialisation and manufacturing, but these were for the most part limited and marginal (see Owen 1981, 209–213; Quataert 1994, 888–928).

about half of agrarian production was for markets and raw materials and foodstuffs accounted for ninety per cent of Ottoman exports (Pamuk 1987, 26, 40). In addition, systematic indebtedness of the peasantry constituted a permanent source of surplus extraction (Aytekin 2008, 296).

The prevalence of foreign loans to the Ottoman state from the Crimean War onwards provided an additional, and even more lucrative, mechanism through which Ottoman surpluses were redirected to European capitalists. Loans were taken out to support the maintenance of the burgeoning Ottoman state, in particular for the extraordinary financing of wars with Russia. Beginning with a loan in 1854 of just over £3 million, by 1875 state indebtedness had risen to £242 million, resulting in state bankruptcy. Subsequently, in 1881 the OPDA was set up to enforce debt obligations to foreign bankers.⁷⁶ One third of state revenues came under European control through the OPDA, including those from state run monopolies such as salt and tobacco,⁷⁷ and taxes and tributes from regions such as Bulgaria, Rumelia and Cyprus (Birdal 2010, 7). By 1900, the OPDA had extended its reach to 720 tax-collecting offices across the Empire, supervising tax collection and auctioning tax-farms (Owen 1981, 194). Furthermore, foreign financiers were able to use Ottoman state power to help service the debt, be it by dismantling agrarian production (Birdal 2010, 145–148), facilitating foreign direct investment (Birdal 2010, 93–96),⁷⁸ encouraging European imports (Owen 1981, 195), or establishing new trade monopolies and industries (Birdal 2010, 131). European state power was also mobilised on behalf of bond-holders to coercively encourage repayment. Prior to the establishment of the OPDA, a committee of bond-holders attended the Congress of Berlin (1878) to obtain government support for their claims. In 1879, the British reminded the Ottomans of their obligations by sending warships to the Dardanelles (Owen 1981, 110). Such was the nexus between finance

⁷⁶ In addition to the solitary Ottoman member of the council, the remaining seats consisted of representatives of foreign banks that held Ottoman bonds. This included two French members, one from Germany, Austria and Italy each, and one between England and Holland (Birdal 2010, 6).

⁷⁷ In the case of the Régie Company, payments were collected *directly* from the Régie's warehouses (Birdal 2010, 90). To paraphrase Trotsky's analysis of the Russian countryside, this converted the Ottoman peasant into 'a tributary of the Stock Exchanges of the world' (Trotsky 1969, 49).

⁷⁸ Primarily railroads, accounting for 63% of all foreign direct investment up to 1914 (Birdal 2010, 96).

and foreign intervention in Ottoman affairs that Lord Derby, British foreign secretary, could remark in 1879 that 'the daily surveillance of which Turkey is the object in her domestic affairs has reduced her sovereign authority to practically zero' (Lord Derby cited in Blaisdell 1929, 26).

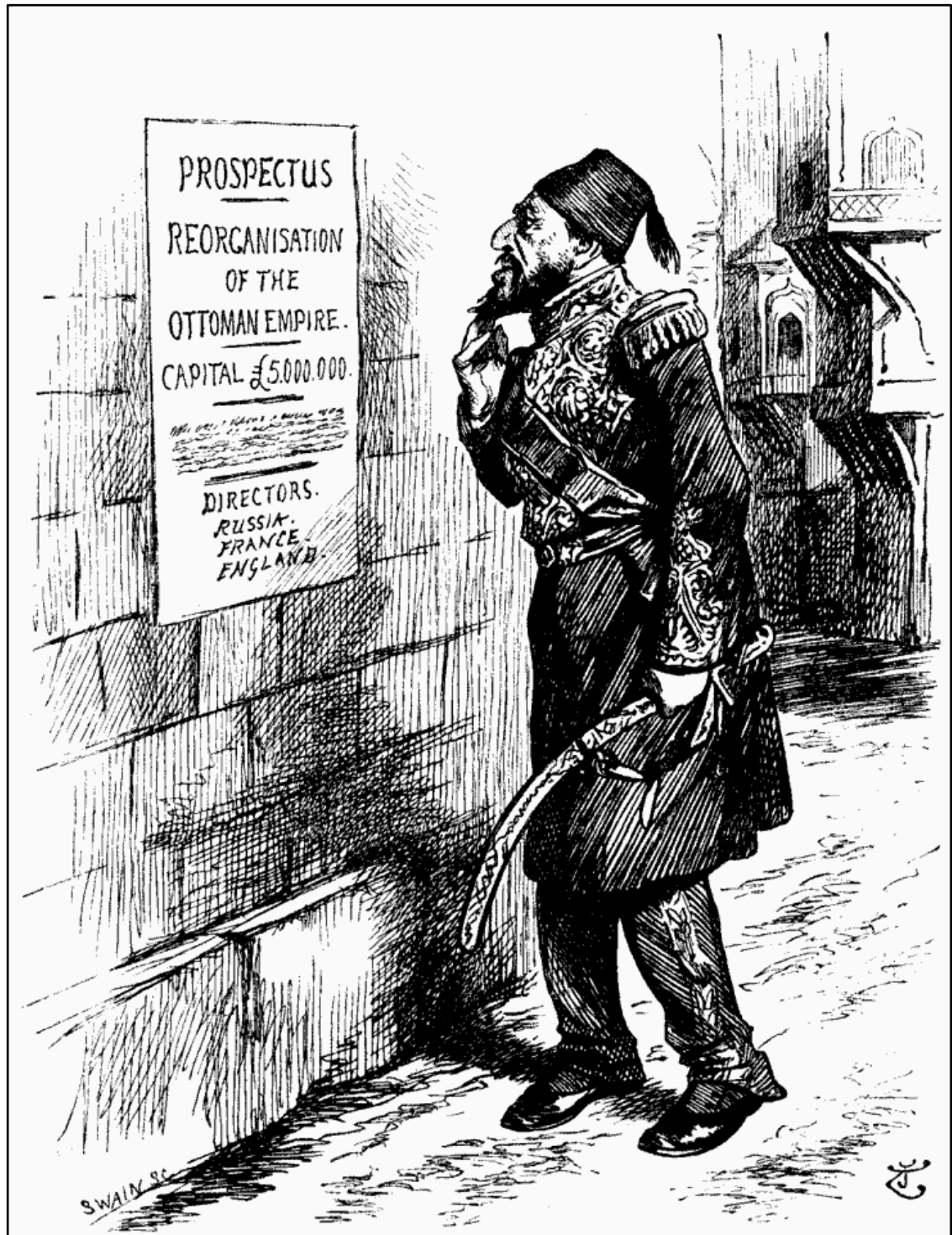


Figure 5. 'Sultan - "Make me into a Limited Company? H'm—Ah—S'pose they'll allow me to join the Board after Allotment!" The Powers consider the advisability of placing the Turk "under control."' 'Turkey Limited' Punch Magazine November 28, 1896.

6.3.2 Changing relations between centre and province

The simultaneous tendency towards conserving and dissolving existing social relations (Banaji 1973, 396) was typical of uneven and combined development. Accordingly, as the spread of capitalism intensified pre-existing tributary social relations, there was an attendant escalation of the fundamental class contradictions festering within Ottoman society. Displacement, increased working hours, deepening indebtedness, growing tax demands and a deterioration of living standards had significantly immiserated the bulk of the peasant population (Atabaki 2007, 9–11; Kasaba 1988, 66–67; Quataert 2007, 20–26). Consequently, revolts took place against local governors, sometimes through violent overthrows, but also through the non-violent means of tax avoidance, resistance to conscription, and sabotaging the commercialisation of production (Beinin 2001, 26; Kasaba 1993, 231–233; Quataert 1994, 877–883). In the Balkans these movements fused with ruling class dissent and mutated into nationalist movements (Quataert 1994, 878), while in Egypt peasant rebellions redirected Mehmed Ali's modernisation towards rural decentralisation (Beinin 2001, 27). In the Arab regions, substantial uprisings resisted tax collection, commercialisation and the authority of local notables (Beinin 2001, 60). Later, as tensions over economic disparities between non-Muslims and Muslims escalated, religious and communal riots in Aleppo, Damascus and Mount Lebanon took place (Beinin 2001, 30). And from the Young Turk revolution onwards, the proleterianisation of Ottoman masses intersected with existing peasant grievances and a discontented intelligentsia, marking the beginnings of mass politics in the Ottoman Empire (Beinin 2001, 73–81).⁷⁹ In short, this was a period of heightened struggle between elite modernisers and international profiteers on the one hand, and the masses of toiling labourers upon whose backs the cost of social transformation was loaded on the other.

⁷⁹ For example, in the latter half of 1908, there were 111 strikes across the Empire, mobilising 250,000 workers (Beinin 2001, 78).

These mass struggles intersected with those between the patrimonial authority and landed nobility over the distribution of power and surplus within the empire. In spite of the centralising reforms of the *Tanzimat*, provincial notables were able to retain and, in some cases, expand their personal power and wealth (Owen 1981, 60). In most regions, they were the only agents capable of serving as local administrators and officials (Findley 2008, 25). The control of local notables was formalised in 1840 by granting official recognition of their participation in the new central administrative structures. At the same time, the legal consolidation of private property removed traditional ties of political dependence to the Ottoman centre. As certain sections of the periphery – in particular the Balkans – were exposed to capitalist market relations, some *ayans* were able to access alternative sources of revenue, independent of Ottoman state control (Kasaba 1988, 59). Many found themselves as intermediaries between tributary relations on land and commercial interests internationally, by simultaneously engaging in tax farming, usury and commerce (Kasaba 1988, 75–76).

Nonetheless, the penetration of the Ottoman state into the provinces resulted in deteriorating conditions for the bulk of provincial notables (Kasaba 1988, 58). With the end of tax-farming, local landholders everywhere lost (*de jure*) direct control over the land, the personal right to collect taxes and their own tax-exempt status (Quataert 1994, 877), thus weakening their fiscal hold as tax-farmers and curtailing their political autonomy (Toprak 2007, 31). And so it was the more prosperous notables that were initially targeted by an Ottoman state seeking to halt its spiralling fiscal deficit (Hoffmann 2008, 387). *Ayans*, having amassed hitherto unseen autonomy wealth and power from the eighteenth century onwards, were now confronted by the Ottoman state's own unprecedented attempts to centralise surpluses appropriated on their land.

The pincer movement of Ottoman state penetration into the provinces on the one hand, and the integration of these localities into capitalist markets and geopolitics on the other, delinked ties of dependence between centre and province. With it, the fundamental disincentive for provincial revolt and secession was removed. Due to the

substantial limits placed on their autonomy, power, and share of local surplus, many notables ended up using their state sanctioned administrative positions to oppose the reforms and incite discontented masses against them (İnalçık 2006, 78; Quataert 1994, 881). Secessionist political projects therefore emerged among *ayans* as a conscious political project only once their politico-economic dominance was threatened by the centralising attempts of the Sublime Porte (Hoffmann 2008, 386–387).

These changing relations between provincial notables and state unfolded in a fragmented and uneven fashion across the empire, reflecting the uneven penetration of capitalist markets and geopolitics at different times and at different rates in different regions. The articulation of provincial discontent was strongly determined by the differentiated pre-existing local structures of power and privilege based on landholding, patronage and religion. In particular, the political deployment of religion and ethnicity emerged as an ideologically dominant force in this period. The instantiation of formal equality among citizens under the *Tanzimat* 'tore at the loyalty of its long-privileged Muslim subjects while straining relations between Ottoman Muslims and Christians' (Quataert 1994, 876).

Muslim sections of the ruling class were heavily dependent on agrarian production; their power lay in land rather than commerce (Karpas 1972, 260), and privileges based on religious hierarchy (Quataert 1994, 876). In turn, they primarily articulated their discontent through the increasingly marginalised members of the *ulema* (Karpas 1972, 251). And as these reforms were associated with Western penetration, local Muslim power holders began to appeal to the specifically modern notions of anti-imperialism, whilst simultaneously rejecting the coexistence of different religious communities (Makdisi 2002b, 602–603). This constituted a political faction intent on maintaining principles of the *Şeriat* and re-establishing the traditional form of Ottoman Empire. The political success of this part of the ruling class culminated in the Hamidian restoration of 1878, which sought to revive the centrality of the Caliphate and rearticulate Ottoman authority in terms of pan-Islamism (Karpas 1972, 261, 273).

In contrast, Christian communities in the Balkans had long established strong commercial links with European states (Kasaba 1988, 28–31). Foreign traders favoured cooperation with non-Muslim sections of Ottoman society that dominated trade and finance, elevating the material standing of Christians within the Empire. Thus earlier, and more extensively than any other part of the empire, these regions witnessed the development of wage-labour relations, manufacturing, finance and commerce which were combined with semi-feudal political ties of patronage and authority (Karpát 1972, 248–249). Rumelian lands were the most productive and populous in the Empire, and were consequently singled out as the most profitable region from which surpluses could be centralised (Quataert 2005, 112). Yet, under these increasingly exacting demands for surpluses, non-Muslim sections had few outlets in the Ottoman state to which they could turn to articulate their discontent. Resentment at the encroachment by the Ottoman state was ideologically pitted against Ottoman reformers, Muslim landholders and the reactionary *ulema*, and thus articulated through local ethnic and religious differences, nationalism and Christianity (Beinin 2001, 58). Such divisions became increasingly irreconcilable as the nineteenth century progressed, with growing levels of state violence – such as large scale massacres and forced migrations – deployed to suppress provincial dissent (Kasaba 2009, 126–135; Quataert 1994, 881; Quataert 2005, 69). Insofar as reforms in line with non-Muslim interests appeared to be imposed by European powers, this section of Ottoman society sought *external* protection via European states, rather than internal renegotiation (Beinin 2001, 47). Ethnic and religious divisions were repeatedly encouraged and exploited by Great Powers as a pretext for intervention in Ottoman affairs.⁸⁰ Thus, the capitalist-tributary combination was most pronounced and most explosive here. It was therefore in the Balkans that the first, and most sustained, moves for breaking from the Ottoman Empire emerged.

⁸⁰ For example, in the Crimean War, Russia supported ethnic based rebellion in the Crimea, and then intervened in the region as protectors of the Orthodox Christians. Britain and France, concerned with Russian gains, supported the Ottoman Empire, and in exchange were able to carve out privileges for their own non-Muslim Ottoman dependents.

Standing effectively between this contradictory class composition was a layer of military bureaucrats. Under the modernising reforms of the Ottoman military, and the destruction of the Janissaries, positions had become salaried and thus decoupled from direct access to the means production. As a result the military's position within the ruling-class was now determined solely by office holding and therefore intimately related to the fate of the state bureaucracy (Trimberger 1978, 79, 91). The struggles and conflicts taking place over property relations and the distribution of surplus were therefore relatively peripheral to their material interests, unless they constituted a fundamental challenge to the existence of the state. Hence, these bureaucratic elites had no vested interest in maintaining either pre-capitalist property relations, or petty commodity production and trade agreements with Europe (Trimberger 1978, 66). In addition, with the introduction of salaried positions and separation of power into departments and ministries, personal relations linking the military to the Sultan, and the military to the peasantry were broken down, giving way to impersonal power relations (Findley 2000, 33; Göçek 1996, 82). Such changes facilitated increased exposure among military bureaucrats to Western ideological and technical influence. In particular, Western technical training and translation bureaus became fundamental to the functioning of an Ottoman state increasingly dependent on European support (Findley 1980, 183–190, 255–264). These 'upwardly mobile bureaucrats' experienced the concentrated effects of the contradictions of sociological amalgamation. They were simultaneously imbued with Western inspired nationalist ideology and methods in statecraft, but confronted by international Western penetration and domestic patrimonial restrictions on high office (Trimberger 1978, 84). It was from this section of the ruling-class that emerged calls for secularisation of rule, impersonalisation of political authority, and a desire for autonomous domestic economic development along capitalist lines (Trimberger 1978, 105).

Nevertheless, as the Ottoman Empire lurched from crisis to crisis, political solutions 'from above' continued to be articulated within the limits of tributary material and ideological parameters. Nation-state building in terms of Ottomanism

under the Young Ottomans (1865) and Young Turks (1908), and pan-Islamism under Sultan Abdulhamid (1878), contained both reformist and conservative elements (Karpas 2000a, 5–19; Zürcher 2000, 173). While they included attempts to introduce ‘modern’ reforms, each also sought to re-establish the strength of an empire based on tributary social relations (Balkılıç and Dölek 2013, 317; Macfie 1996, 86, 90; Philliou 2011, 167). The contradiction of this tributary-capitalist amalgam was expressed within the state ideologically, by the incongruity of the increasingly capitalist character of the state-form with pre-existing ideological and legal forms of legitimisation based on *Şeriat* and *Kanun*.⁸¹ Fuad Pasha (one of the more influential proponents of Ottomanism) perfectly captured the redefinition of the political subject along modern lines, through appeal to the old symbols of Sultanic imperial power:

‘all people should act in accordance with the Sultan’s benevolent wishes, and each class of the imperial subjects should embrace tightly the principles of unity, patriotism and service to the nation.’ (Pasha cited in Makdisi 2002b, 606).

Similarly, the redefinition of relations between state and society through Western inspired capitalist-colonialist-Orientalist distinctions between ‘civilised’ elites and ‘savage’ provincials were refracted through symbols of religion (Deringil 1999, 19). Thus, Mehmet Izzet, one of the official interpreters of the Imperial Palace, wrote:

‘The practice of “colonialism” is one in which a civilised state sends settlers out to lands where people still live in a state of nomadism and savagery, developing these areas, and causing them to become a market for its goods... [these people] who are savages and heretics can only be saved by an invitation into the True Faith’ (Izzet cited in Deringil 2003, 312).

In sum, the capitalist-tributary amalgam expressed itself in way that made the Empire unable to sustain itself, but simultaneously unable to decisively transform

⁸¹ This is not to say that Islam is or was inherently incompatible with capitalism. But the peculiarity of the role of Islam in the multi-religious and multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire was that it precluded the possibility of a formal instantiation of political equality within its ‘really existing’ ideological and legal parameters. Moreover, the *ulema* was a bulwark of conservatism against attempts at reform primarily due to its own economic privileges based on the Islamic pre-capitalist institution of *waqf* landholding. All of these were therefore historically specific features, related to social relations of production, rather than any essential characteristics of Islam.

itself. And although provincial notables in general were threatened by these reforms, the regional unevenness of the Ottoman Empire meant that there was neither a basis for internal unity within this class (Barkey 1994, 56), nor any impulse for radical revolutionary change of the empire as a whole. The intra-ruling class conflict instead took the form of localised attempts to shake off the Ottoman yoke and establish independent political control over pre-existing territorial jurisdictions. The nationalist project of Ottomanism therefore proved inherently contradictory.

The limits of Ottoman transformation were not simply an internal blockage to reform, caused by an inherent conservatism, a localised world view, or the absence of a revolutionary progressive class. While there were certain domestic limits to organic, radical, modal transformation, Ottoman developments were also heavily circumscribed by the geopolitical conditions of the nineteenth century. The exigencies of capitalist geopolitics limited the possibility of any section of Ottoman society decisively moving against the tributary material and ideological reproduction of the state. Materially, the strength of the Ottoman state was tied into a relation of dependence with European Great Powers. The strategic importance of the Ottoman state to British interests was predicated on the former's ability to maintain the latter's hegemony in the East, by checking Russian expansion. So long as the Ottoman state remained strong in this regard, the continuation and extension of financial and military European support would be guaranteed. At the same time, the stability of the Ottomans' centralised hold over its provinces was itself underpinned by European financial and military support. Therefore, materially, pre-capitalist social relations had to be left untouched (for any change would spark provincial rebellion), while ideologically nationalism had to be articulated on the contradictory lines of Ottomanism, precisely because European protection was predicated on the maintenance of the specifically non-(or multi-)national and tributary Ottoman Empire.

Herein lies the paradox of the Eastern Question. European intervention prevented an Ottoman collapse which could have otherwise occurred much earlier (one only has

to consider what the fate of the Ottoman Empire would have been if left to its own devices in the Crimean War, or against Mehmet Ali). But at the same time, the economic and strategic constraints placed upon the Ottomans also prevented any definitive resolution of imperial decline. The survival of the pre-capitalist Ottoman state and the capitalist European balance of power thus bonded into an uneasy relation of interdependence, wherein Ottoman domestic coherence existed in a symbiotic relationship with its legitimacy internationally (Deringil 1999, 9–10). Should a link break in this interdependence, the shackles that preserved the contradictory ideological and material reproduction of the Ottoman Empire would loosen. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire must therefore be seen as the combination of its domestic crises with its crisis of legitimacy internationally. In the final section I will demonstrate that the international dimension of this crisis was intimately bound in the uneven and combined development of capitalism in Europe toward the end of the nineteenth century.

6.4 Why *then*? The conjunctural specificity of geopolitics in the late 19th century

Britain's prodigious industrial and imperial growth from the later eighteenth century onward generated a 'whip of external necessity' that both facilitated and compelled other states to 'catch up.' As 'latecomers,' they could leap over the 'intermediary stages' of prior development and take on the most advanced technologies and social forms 'all at once'. Subsequently, the latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed a rapid and concentrated 'chain' of industrial revolutions that spread across Europe and the Atlantic (Rosenberg 2013b, 208). By the end of the Great Depression, Germany, the USA, and later Russia and Sweden had all joined France and Britain as industrial powers (Hobsbawm 1987, 35). Productivity exploded in both the 'core' and 'periphery', through the hastening circulation of capital and the deepening expansion of European colonial command over Africa and

Asia (Hobsbawm 1987, 57). National economies became inextricably linked to colonial possessions and the political acquisition of new markets engendered the frenzied 'scrambles' over Africa and the Pacific. Colonial expansionism, economic prosperity and military growth thus congealed into an uneasy and crisis prone relation of imperialist competition between Great Powers (Hobsbawm 1987, 317).

Hence, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the British found themselves in an international context rife with emerging competitors that could, and eventually would, challenge the status quo of their global hegemony.⁸² With the solidification of European 'national economies' and their colonial possessions, Britain became threatened by the heightening geopolitical rivalries 'in which the gains of one seemed to threaten the position of others' (Hobsbawm 1987, 42). In short, these shifts in relations of unevenness internationally created 'rapid alterations in the Continental balance of power, themselves attendant upon the dynamic historical unevenness of industrialisation across Europe,' which 'undermined established geopolitical configurations' (Rosenberg 2013b, 208). Moreover, the internationalisation of Great Power rivalries meant that disputes tended to emerge in non-European entanglements. Thus, the likelihood that disputes over Africa, China, and the Maghreb would spark crises amongst European rivals became a prevalent feature of the late nineteenth century. In the Ottoman Empire, this international dynamic was played out through the redefinition of the Eastern Question. Since the 'Eastern Question paradox' was an emergent property of the geopolitical configuration of British hegemony, once this hegemony was threatened, the parameters of geopolitical combination were transformed too. Specifically, the rise of Germany as a would-be imperial power reordered the position of the Ottoman Empire within European Great Power geopolitics.

In Ottoman territories, this reordering became evident through the dual development of increasing German influence and declining British support. For

⁸² Before the turn of the twentieth century, British finance and industry had fallen behind the US and Germany, whilst competitors in British dominated markets caused a precipitous drop in the British share in world trade (Anievas 2014; Hobsbawm 1987, 47).

Germany, an embryonic empire seeking its 'place in the sun', the Ottoman Empire remained one of the few territories still up for colonial grabs (Pamuk 1987, 35). Wilhelm II saw Ottoman territory 'as a hallowed ground' which would prove vital to German policy of *Mittleeuropa*, 'connecting German and Habsburg realms to the Near East and thus the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean' (Aksakal 2010, 66). He subsequently sought to establish German influence through a series of visits and speeches in Ottoman territories, where he presented himself as the ally and friend of 'three hundred million Muslims' (Trumpener 1996, 108). Yet Germany's latecomer status also called for the maintenance of Ottoman territories in the face of centrifugal nationalist secession movements that could not but help benefit the better established economic interests in the Near East – Britain, Russia, and France. As late as 1913 German's Ottoman Ambassador Hans von Wangenheim lamented:

'We are not at all prepared to settle down in West Asia... Our schools, churches, etc. cannot be compared with those of France, Russia, and England, which were established over the course of centuries... We have a great deal of catching up to do... The aim of our policy, therefore, can only be to delay Turkey's dissolution for as long as possible' (von Wangenheim cited in Aksakal 2010, 68).

German policy was consequently centred on 'informal' imperial pursuits, such as constructing railways, and providing military equipment and training (Aksakal 2010, 80–83). German armaments industries massively profited from sale of machinery, arms and naval units to the Ottomans, often financed by loans from German banks, and administered by German military officers (Trumpener 1996, 112–113). In particular, the Baghdad Railway served as the primary mediator of German imperial interests. With plans to set up agrarian colonies along the route, the Baghdad railway was intended to aid further, more formal imperial endeavours in the region. The financing of the project facilitated German preponderance in Ottoman finance through the OPDA. By linking Konya to the Persian Gulf, it also aimed to supersede the route to India via Suez, thus constituting a challenge to British hegemony in the subcontinent (McMurray 2001, 3).

For Britain, in this context of increasing geopolitical competition, ‘the protection costs’ of its colonial and semi-colonial possessions ‘began to escalate, and its imperial possessions turned from assets into liabilities’ (Arrighi 2005, 93). This became manifest in the Near East, as Britain’s strategic attention turned to maintaining the defence of India by securing its dominance in the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia, which were threatened by German imperial competition (Kent 1996, 165–166, 171–172). Although maintaining status quo in the region typically rested on maintaining the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, the situation began to change under these conditions of heightened geopolitical rivalry with Germany. Following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and Britain’s occupation of Egypt in 1882, its Red Sea access to the Indian Ocean became decoupled from sustaining the Ottoman Empire as a whole. Furthermore, from the 1860s, but especially after the 1880s, British commercial interests in the Ottoman Empire dwindled, as other areas of international trade became more attractive (Pamuk 1987, 78). Finally, the Ottomans’ suppression of nationalist movements in the Balkans, and Abdulhamid’s attempts to reassert Sultanic authority in the Arabian Peninsula marked a shift in British political opinion towards an anti-Ottoman sentiment (Rubin 2012, 995). Consequently, the Ottomans’ strategic importance became substantially weakened in the eyes of its principle guardian.

These developments both contributed to, and combined with, the shifting configurations of European geopolitics. As imperial competition between Germany and Britain grew (both within and without the Ottoman Empire), new strategic alignments emerged between former foes – Britain, France and Russia – in order to balance against Germany (Fortna 2008, 44). In this context, Britain’s desire to maintain the Ottoman Empire came into conflict with its desire to appease its new allies (Kent 1996, 166). In particular, Britain became considerably less resistant to Russia’s historic mission of securing the Straits and liberating Slavic communities in the Ottoman Empire (Bodger 1996, 73; Hanioğlu 2008, 85).

Increasingly isolated internationally, the Ottoman Empire became exposed to the latent internal and external pressures that had been building since the onset of the *Tanzimat*, and a period of massive territorial fragmentation ensued. Within half a decade Britain had secured its interests in the Mediterranean by occupying Cyprus (1878) and then Egypt (1882). Russia, now free from British military and diplomatic opposition, carved out possessions in Ardahan, Batum and Kars, while Montenegro, Romania and Serbia gained independence under Russian auspices (1878). The Austro-Hungarian Empire occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878. France annexed Tunis in 1881. Later Crete would be granted autonomy (1898) and Kuwait was occupied by Britain (1899). Bulgaria and Albania were able to achieve formal independence (1908 and 1912, respectively). Italy, another late developer seeking to enter the ‘Scramble for Africa’ annexed Tripoli and the Dodecanese Islands (1912). Western Thrace became part of Bulgaria and Greece (1912), and Macedonia was partitioned among Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia (1912-13).



Figure 6. Ottoman territorial losses 1807-1923

Throughout, the Ottomans repeatedly and unsuccessfully appealed to Britain for protection from this territorial dismemberment (Hanioğlu 2008, 85). That such appeals persistently fell on deaf ears demonstrated Britain's relative apathy towards a crumbling empire no longer strategically worth propping up. This realignment of the Eastern Question came to a head on the eve of the WWI. European geopolitical rivalries crystallised into the alliances of the Triple Entente and Central Powers, and the Ottoman hand was forced:

‘The fact that the Entente powers (above all Russia) constituted the greatest threat to the Ottoman and refused the empire an entente made it all but certain that the Turks would enter the conflict on the side of the Central Powers’ (Bromley 1994, 72).

In the context of this general international crisis, guaranteeing Ottoman survival and reclaiming imperial possessions was only conceivable through an alliance with Germany (Karsh and Karsh 2001, 109–117). However, the Ottoman entry into the war on the German side, on the one hand, condemned the Ottoman Empire to its end; on the other hand, it opened the geopolitical space for the emergence of a political project in the form of Kemalism that could address the sociological contradictions that had emerged in this protracted period of transition. The ailments of ‘the sick man’ could be cured only once the Great Powers – themselves decimated and incapacitated by the ravages of the Great War – became incapable of doing so, such was the paradoxical logic of the Eastern Question.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that Ottoman decline cannot be understood through appeal to essentialised and unitary concepts that are typically presented in the binaries of West-East, capitalist-tributary, modern-tradition. This was a period of their concrete interaction, in which the contradictory outcomes of their interrelation created the sociological conditions of Ottoman collapse. This chapter has argued – in contrast to revisionist approaches – that it is only possible to grasp this process by situating the

long durational changes experienced by the Ottoman Empire from the seventeenth century onwards at the point of their intersection with a developmental process emanating from a spatially differentiated source – that is, the rise of British imperial hegemony in the context of industrial capitalism. The concrete manifestation of the peculiar ‘whip of external necessity’ experienced by the Ottomans can best be summarised in terms of the Eastern Question paradox, in which the stability of the capitalist international order and the unstable tributary Ottoman Empire were tied into a relation of interdependence (Trotsky 1969, 108). Moreover, I have argued that Ottoman decline is inseparable from the ensuing geopolitical transformations – themselves products of uneven and combined development – that served to challenge the status quo of British hegemony. In particular, Germany’s belligerent arrival as an imperial power fundamentally reordered and destabilised the uneasy balance of the Eastern Question paradox. It was only with this general crisis of capitalist international relations, culminating in WWI, that the Ottoman fate was sealed. Any internalist account would, as we have seen, overlook the centrality of this process in grasping Ottoman decline.

The narrative offered here also provides a break with the linear developmentalist and unidirectional picture offered by Modernisation Theory and WST. The international determinations of capitalist modernity were highly significant, but they neither willed nor intended the break-up of the Ottoman Empire. Nor was Ottoman decline the product of a unidirectional transfer of Western sociological forms which swept away the old order. Rather than taking the developmental advantages of capitalism to replicate their Western predecessors, the *Tanzimat* reforms served to deepen tributary politico-economic relations through capitalist means. The Ottoman ruling-classes were unable or – perhaps more accurately – unwilling to fully implement the sort of modernisation they believed would save the Empire, for this would have required a transformation of their tributary social basis of power. ‘Ottomanism’ – the aborted attempt at creating an Ottoman nationalism – thus serves as the concrete expression of the particular ‘contradictions of sociological

amalgamation' that emerged from the reforms of the Tanzimat. Situated within tributary class conflicts, themselves intensified by the pressures of the capitalist market, the state's solutions from above merely served to agitate the centrifugal provincial forces of resistance that they sought to contain. The contradictions which arose out of the amalgam of capitalist and tributary social dynamics created irreconcilable social dislocations, struggles and conflicts that resulted in the territorial fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire. Externalist modes of analysis, with their emphasis on linear developmentalism, would remain blind to the agency and historical specificity of these socio-political battles being waged.

In conclusion, we can thereby see that any conception of development that abstracts the Ottoman social relations from European developments; that separates internal from external modes of analysis; that sets up rigid epistemological distinctions between West and East; and that operates with an ontologically singular approach, will tend to produce a partial account of Ottoman decline that is unable to capture the peculiarity and historical specificity of its eventual collapse. By theoretically integrating internalist and externalist determinations into a unified theory of social development, U&CD is able to better explicate the peculiar, and historically specific causes for the decline of the Ottoman Empire. In doing so, it breaks down the epistemological distinction between the Ottomans and Europe, by showing that the former's late history was inseparable from the contemporaneous development of capitalist modernity. That it does so by highlighting the refracted and divergent developmental path experienced by the Ottomans provides an alternative and, I have argued, superior explanation of Ottoman decline to both orthodox and revisionist approaches. Rather than becoming like Europe, the Ottoman confrontation with capitalist modernity heightened the differences between the two. As Trotsky observed, the process through which capitalist development subsumed pre-capitalist societies involved:

'Linking up countries and continents that stand on different levels of development into a system of mutual dependence and antagonism, levelling out the various stages

of their development and at the same time immediately enhancing the differences between them, and ruthlessly counterposing one country to another' (Trotsky 1974b, 4-5)

In presenting this final part of the argument, we can thus see how U&CD can articulate the peculiarities and specificities of a particular path of social development through a theory of the universal that is sensitive to heterogeneity. But moreover, we can see that the seemingly contradictory opposition of Ottoman historiography – between the 'sick man' and the agent of modernisation – is nothing other than a reflection of the contradictions in the real historical process. The Ottoman Empire in this period was a complex combination of 'modern' and 'pre-modern' tendencies. Any explanation that only privileges one side of this reality, that analyses the Ottoman Empire from a single vantage point, will end up missing the peculiarity and complexity of its history.

7. Conclusion

‘The true charm of the Bosphorus... lies in its endless variety of perspective: it is like a garland, woven by the hand of beauty, of which each blossom is brighter than the last; not a rock, not a tree, not a tower, could be displaced without injury to the whole. Rival castles, looking each upon the other from the shores of Europe and Asia, stand on the nearest point of approach between the coasts, and seem at one interval to close the entrance of the channel; but, as the rapid caique starts onward, they yield to laughing groves, and painted palaces, and hamlets scattered along the lip of the water, and mirrored in the waves; and the beautiful curve is lost only to be succeeded by another, and another. At almost every boat’s length, the vista changes, and presents new combinations...’ Julia Pardoe, 1839

7.1 Overcoming East and West

This thesis has answered the research question ‘*what can explain how the Ottoman Empire can be the object of such conflicting interpretations?*’ by showing either side of the Eurocentric-revisionist divide is partially ‘correct.’ Each captures a one-sided aspect of the seemingly dual character of Ottoman history – Eastern and Western, Asian and European. But moreover, I have shown that this one-sidedness is an unavoidable product of the theoretical deficiencies of Eurocentrism and revisionist historiography. We saw that both tend to replicate a strict epistemological division between West and East, through the related binaries of external and internal, universal and particular. Where Eurocentric accounts have emphasised the universal(ising) character of Western social forms they have placed an emphasis on external factors in explaining

Ottoman development. Revisionist explanations have challenged this by highlighting the other side – the particular characteristics of the Ottomans' internal development, independent of Western influence. What neither has achieved is a way of bringing these two distinct, equally perceptive, yet equally problematic strands of the Empire's real history together. I have argued that the mutual incompatibility of these approaches is rooted in an ontologically singular understanding of the Ottoman Empire on the one hand, and European modernity on the other. As long as each remained hermetically sealed off from its interactions with the other, the epistemological boundaries of West and East could not be breached.

I have argued that U&CD not only reveals this tension in greater clarity, but provides a way of overcoming it. I have shown that it does so by breaking the limits of ontological singularity, and positing in its place the ontologically multiple and interactive character of social development. The application of this approach to Ottoman history took place in three parts. Beginning in Chapter Four with the origins of the Empire, I argued that the use of ontologically singular categories such as 'Asiatic', 'Feudal' or 'Islamic' tended to paint a static and essentialist picture of Ottoman history. Moreover, I demonstrated that the commitment to ontological singularity entailed an epistemological division between West and East, where the study of the Ottoman Empire was framed by the spatial vantage point from which it was studied. In contrast, I argued that re-theorising Ottoman social relations from an international vantage point uncovered a *multiplicity* of spatio-temporal vectors of development – Inner Asian, Seljuk and Southeast European – which revealed a social complexity and dynamism missed by dominant accounts. Thus, breaking from ontologically singular explanations, U&CD removed the foundational claim of Eurocentric analyses; that the Ottoman Empire was a static and fixed entity, one which could be explicated entirely through its own essential characteristics. In doing so, U&CD also removed the binary opposition of Western and Eastern epistemological vantage points, thus overcoming the need to fit Ottoman history into *one* of these ontologically singular theoretical straitjackets. In this light, the opposition between

Eurocentric and non-Eurocentric approaches could be reconsidered as the product of an unnecessary division, rooted in one-sided characterisations of the Ottoman Empire's social relations.

This thesis has shown that one-sided or partial views typical of the East-West dichotomy also serve to hermetically separate the Ottoman Empire from wider developments in world history, and in particular from the history of capitalist modernity. Thus, having identified the international component of the tributary mode of production, in Chapter Five the historical pendulum swung from 'East to West', and exhibited the impact of the Ottoman Empire on sixteenth century European developments. I argued that uneven relations between the Ottomans and European states created forms of combined development that eventually gave rise to the capitalist mode of production. This was demonstrated through the geopolitical impact of the Ottomans on the breakdown of Christendom, the structural shift from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, and the primitive accumulation of capital in England. The fact that these were all caused in large part by international, non-European determinations, suggests that we need to seriously rethink the strict dichotomisation of West versus East that underpins dominant understandings of 'the Rise of West'. In other words, through a reconceptualisation of a typically 'Eastern' empire, I have shown that it is possible to reconceptualise and re-theorise our understanding of 'the West', in a way that moves beyond the hitherto dominant ontology of singularity.

Finally, as the historical pendulum swung back from 'West to East', I showed that the subsequent expansion of capitalist modernity was far from the monolithic and unidirectional 'Westernisation' of the Ottoman Empire typical of linear developmentalist approaches such as Modernisation Theory and World-Systems Theory. Changes in the Ottoman Empire were understood through the processes in which different social classes in the Ottoman Empire came to terms with, and adapted to, the pressures of an international condition defined by capitalist geopolitical and economic relations. The latter were therefore refracted through, combined with, and scrambled by, pre-existing social relations. Thus, against

revisionist approaches, I have also argued that Ottoman developments in this period are only properly explicable when situated in the uneven and combined development of capitalism. Indeed, it was only following the breakdown of British hegemony, and the subsequent unravelling of ‘the Eastern Question paradox’, that the Ottoman Empire sustained its most dramatic, and ultimately fatal, existential crisis. As such, U&CD was concretely manifested both by the contradictory sociological amalgamation, and geopolitical combination, of tributary and capitalist modes of production.

7.2 Multiple Vantage Points

What broader theoretical conclusions can be drawn from this analysis? I have argued that ossified abstractions such as capitalism, feudalism, tributary, Islam, Oriental despotism *et cetera*, tend to break down as singular *explanans* when viewed from the perspective of international history. Insofar as the Ottoman Empire was an admixture of *multiple* historical determinations, any singular conceptual abstraction would miss or obscure the complexity of its concrete history, and instead produce the sort of strict historiographical divisions that have blighted Ottoman studies.

In approaching the Ottoman Empire theoretically, we are therefore confronted with how we use concepts such as ‘the West,’ ‘capitalism’ and ‘modernity’ in contrast to ‘the East,’ ‘tributary’ and ‘traditionalism.’ In the abstract, these categories appear mutually incommensurable and contradictory, ideal types of antithetical historical epochs or social forms. As we have seen, WST and Modernisation Theory deny one side of the contradiction by abstracting from the specificity of the Ottoman Empire. The anti-Eurocentric critics in contrast, abstract from the other side: the international. Thus, on either side of the division, contradiction is understood as something that arises out of an inappropriate application of abstract concepts to concrete history, and consequently something that can, and should, be explained away. Typically, this took place through separating Ottoman history into distinct monolithic explanatory blocs –

the *sui generis* Eastern character of its pre-capitalist, pre-modern history on the one hand, and the universal Western character of capitalist modern history on the other. In contrast, this thesis has shown that the parcellisation of Ottoman history into such differentiated strands is indicative of a very real, and complicated, history that has been thus far only partially presented from these singular vantage points. Ottoman history was characterised by the contradictory confrontation, interaction and combination of pre-capitalist and capitalist, pre-modern and modern, 'Eastern' and 'Western', *sui generis* and universal, in ways that subvert the essentialisation of these very dichotomies. Indeed, such contradictions make up the 'living texture of the historical process' (Trotsky 1974b, 16), and are not to be evaded by emphasising one side over the other, but captured and explained.

I have argued that singular abstractions of this sort are best understood as 'vantage points', or 'windows' that unveil a partial glimpse of social reality, and subsequently 'frame' our understanding of it. Because the view of a complex historical reality from one limited angle, one viewpoint, or one 'window' will tend to be one-sided, the use of multiple vantage points – differentiated but systematically combined – is required in order to gain a fuller picture, and grasp the many determinations that make concrete reality what it is. In this regard, taking a panoramic view of historical process from the vantage point of 'the international' is especially instructive, for it reveals the spatial multiplicity of determinations that tend to be missed when focussing on society in the singular. I have argued that this is precisely how U&CD as a theoretical framework operates, and what gives it a distinct theoretical depth and breadth in contrast to more one-sided approaches. Utilising an international vantage point, it identifies multiple determinations emanating from uneven spatio-temporal vectors of development. It then places relations between these determinations, their points of interactivity, combination, at the heart of its broader and more complex conception of historical development. In this way, it is able to bring together not only theoretically, but also concretely, historical processes derived from multiple vantage points into an interactive totality of social relations. Like Lisa Pardoe's boat travelling

along the Bosphorus, U&CD's charm lies in its attention to the 'endless variety of perspective' that continually unveils new vistas across space and time. U&CD's value resides in its insistence that these multiple perspectives are combined and integrated, so as not to do 'injury to the whole.'

Nonetheless, in line with my arguments in Chapter Three, it is necessary to insist that U&CD remains a hypothesis which requires further testing. In this regard it opens up further avenues for research. Returning to the question of the current political conjuncture in Turkey, I hope that this thesis indicates ways in which we can critically examine 'Ottomania' and its associated problems within the broader secular-Islamist binary that seemingly defines Turkish politics. If one of the central propositions of this thesis is that we seriously reconsider the West versus East division, and rethink its more specific utterances (Islamist-secular, traditional-modern, pre-capitalist-capitalist, inside-outside), I hope that in future research, we can start questioning and rethinking how the memory of the Ottoman Empire is used (and abused) in contemporary Turkish politics.

7.3 The *theory* of U&CD

If we have observed what IR theory has done for Ottoman history, and historical sociology more broadly, we can also see what Ottoman history has done for IR theory. Having traversed three distinct historical periods that marked Ottoman history across the three substantive chapters, we have seen that the sort of historical causal dynamics U&CD claims to identify and theorise were prevalent and causally significant beyond the capitalist epoch; in the nomadic mode of production, tributary mode of production and feudal mode of production. Demonstrating the historical variability and specificity of U&CD in these different historical periods will, I hope, have convinced the reader that even when operating as a general abstraction, U&CD retains enough theoretical depth to penetrate and grasp the historical specificity of the concrete. Through this explication and deployment of U&CD, I hope to have

further defended the theory's general applicability, by providing additional empirical support for its claims.

By testing U&CD outside of the spatial-temporal limits of European capitalism, I have shown that it provides us with a theoretical framework capable of explicating the agency of non-Western societies, without simply subsuming them under a conception of society derived from the Western experience. Such sensitivity to the multiplicity of historical agency provides a substantive new research agenda in which we can think about the universality of the diverse, and the diversity of the universal – a dialectical relation that is inherently at the heart of IR as a discipline.

Through this spatio-temporal examination of U&CD, I hope the reader will recognise the further potential the theory holds for the discipline of IR, and how IR relates to historical sociology and the question of Eurocentrism. There are two issues that I would especially like to emphasise. Firstly, historical sociology has done much to challenge ahistorical and unsociological conceptions of the international, by developing arguments that reveal the changeability and hence, historical specificity of modern IR. However, as we have seen, this historical intervention has typically been centred on case studies drawn from the European experience, conferring upon 'the West' a certain analytical privilege which buttresses normative and prescriptive claims about the universal validity of its social forms. Typically then, the presuppositions of historical sociology and IR have tended to divide international history into distinct Western and Eastern strands, of which the Ottoman Empire is only one instance. By challenging and subverting the East-West separation on the terrain of the Ottoman Empire, I hope to have opened new ways of exploring this *problématique* in IR more broadly.

Secondly, as we have seen, scholars working in IR have drawn on categories, ideas, historical evidence and methods, from the classics of historical sociology. But there has not been an extensive treatment of how this relationship might be inverted; that is, how historical sociology might itself be rethought or reconstituted from the vantage point of IR. By providing an alternative account of the origins of capitalist

modernity, I hope this thesis will begin a conversation about how IR as a discipline can substantively contribute to a distinct and improved theorisation of capitalist modernity. It is a daunting and potentially hazardous journey that confronts us as IR scholars, but one we must explore with relish and adventure.

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Appendix A: Glossary

ahitname – a treaty or pact.

akhis – guilds, associations or urban confraternities. Sometimes organised around heterodox Islamic mysticism and linked by solidarity and comradeship.

akıncı – irregular Turkic/ Ottoman nomadic marcher/ raider.

akritai – irregular Byzantine nomadic marcher/ raider.

asker – literally soldier. A member of the Ottoman class.

askeri – the Ottoman ruling-class.

akçe – a silver coin, the chief monetary unit of the Ottoman Empire.

Ataman – Pontic term for tribal leader.

avarız – an extraordinary Ottoman levy used for military purposes. By the late sixteenth century becomes a regular tax.

bey – local governor responsible for administering a *beylik*. Also refers to the leader of nomadic tribes.

beylerbey – ‘commander of commanders.’ The highest rank in the hierarchy of provincial Ottoman administrators, responsible for overseeing multiple *beyliks*.

beylik – an emirate or principality.

cerig – Mongol standing army. The Khan’s personal troops.

cizye – Ottoman head tax for non-Muslims.

devşirme – the practice by which Ottomans took boys from their Christian families, converted them to Islam, and trained them for positions in military or administrative functions of the Empire.

dhimmi – term referring to non-Muslim citizens of the Ottoman Empire. The institutionalised form of *istimalet*.

emirs – may refer to regional rulers, commanders, leaders of nomadic tribes and raiding clans. Also called *maliks*.

futuwwa – see *akhis*

ghazi – Ottoman/ Seljuk frontier raider.

ghulam – conscripted, slave, standing army found in Seljuks, Sammanid and Ghaznavid Empires and other subsequent Arabian empires.

istimalet – principle of accommodation. Mainly used to maintain the laws and customs of conquered territories.

iqta – Seljuk unit of land, allocated to troops in return for military service

jasagh – secular Mongol law

kadi – Islamic official or judge.

kadi-asker – head judge, or ‘judge of the army’ – one of the highest military-administrative positions in the Ottoman Empire.

Kanun – the secular legal and administrative regulations in the Ottoman Empire that supplemented the *Şeriat* and the discretionary authority of the Sultan.

kapıkullar – the slave corps, administrative and military. Sometimes referred to as *devşirme*.

kul – slave levy, used to transfer boys from conquered territories to the central administrative functions of the state. Sometimes referred to as *devşirme*.

malik – see *emirs*.

malikane – life term tax-farms.

medresse – school or centre of Islamic scholarship.

miri – state owned land.

mülk – term designating private property in Ottoman Empire.

mukatah – generic term for land allocation.

orfi – Ottoman ‘sovereign prerogative’, used to levy customary dues on decree.

öşür – Ottoman tithe, which took one-tenth of agricultural produce.

paroikoi – dependent or enserfed tenants on Byzantine land

pronoia – Byzantine unit of land, allocated to troops in return for military service.

reaya – Ottoman peasantry. Literally ‘the flock.’

salgun – illegal levies imposed on peasants in the Ottoman Empire.

sancak – literally district, banner or flag. Administrative divisions of the Ottoman Empire.

sancak beys – governor of a *sancak*; imperial officers.

Şeriat – Ottoman-Turkish term for Sharia. The moral code and religious law of Islam.

sipahi – Ottoman cavalry men, typically associated with *timar* landholdings.

sürgün – an obligatory transfer, which required the migration of sedentary and nomadic communities to settle in newly conquered territories.

timar – the basic form of land allocation in the Ottoman Empire. Predominant up to the seventeenth century.

Tümen – Mongolian military unit consisting of ten thousand troops.

ulema – a body of Muslim scholars, judges or religious leaders.

ulufa – extraordinary Mongol tax used for military purposes. Also used in the Ottoman Empire.

waqf – Ottoman/ Seljuk/ Persian pious foundation. Main form of private property in Ottoman Empire.

yeniceri – Janissary, literally ‘new soldier.’ Ottoman standing army and the Sultan's household troops.

Appendix B: Sources for Epigraphs

Chapter Three

‘The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence the unity of the diverse.’ Karl Marx 1857 (Marx 1973, 101)

Chapter Five

‘Modern history of Europe begins under stress of the Ottoman conquest.’ Lord Acton 1834-1902 (cited in Iyigun 2008, 1465)

Chapter Six

‘Your civilisation, it is a poison, but it is a poison that wakes one up and one cannot, one does not want to sleep anymore. One feels that if one were to close one’s eyes it would be in order to die.’ Enver Pasha, 1911 (cited in Göçek 1996, 117)

Chapter Seven

‘The true charm of the Bosphorus... lies in its endless variety of perspective: it is like a garland, woven by the hand of beauty, of which each blossom is brighter than the last; not a rock, not a tree, not a tower, could be displaced without injury to the whole. Rival castles, looking each upon the other from the shores of Europe and Asia, stand on the nearest point of approach between the coasts, and seem at one interval to close the entrance of the channel; but, as the rapid caique starts onward, they yield to laughing groves, and painted palaces, and hamlets scattered along the lip of the water, and mirrored in the waves; and the beautiful curve is lost only to be succeeded by another, and another. At almost every boat’s length, the vista changes, and presents new combinations.’ Julia Pardoe, 1839 (Pardoe 1838, 152)